

RAZORCAKE

#31 • \$4 U.S.



REGULATIONS

DEAD MOON • HELLBILLYS
CAN KICKERS • GUILTY HEARTS
PUNK ROCK BOWLING

I was on my back at the bottom of an abandoned swimming pool after an hour of skating, hoping the pain would subside. I heard a wet snap and didn't want to look. I hadn't been getting rad. I was just returning to the shallow end, something I've done thousands of times. When I looked, my foot was pointing in the wrong direction and was slowly trying to correct itself. My back foot had slipped off my skateboard and I'd run over my ankle. This was mid September. We'd literally dropped off the last *Razorcakes* for our bi-monthly big mailout hours before. As a treat to myself for working so hard, I'd planned a week-long "vacation at home," where I didn't have anything solid planned except skating new places, reading, listening to music, and hanging out.

Luckily, I was with friends—Shoreleave Shawn, Alicia, their young son Ellis. After a six-hour wait in the emergency room, I'd discovered that I'd twisted my foot so violently that my ankle snapped, energy continued up a ligament, and that broke a smaller bone the lower leg, my fibula. Luckily, another longtime friend, Megan Pants, picked me up after getting a temporary cast. She drove me to and from surgery the next day. I got two pins, a few stitches, and the news that I wouldn't be able to walk for at least three months.

The making of this zine is a very physical process. And, for once, I couldn't do it. It felt weird and wrong that all I could do was sit or lay down and watch other people do it. A tremendous gap opened under me.

I remember one day clearly. The apartment has been under siege by termites for over three years. Although they suck, I'm used to them.

Some of them die. Then ants eat them. My leg felt a tingle; I pulled it out from under the desk, and saw that there were about one hundred ants on and inside the cast. I got a flashlight to see where they were concentrated and smacked my forehead on the edge of my desk when I leaned down. For the first time in a long while, I felt crushed. I felt like quitting. All of this: the zine, the books, the non-profit. Kaput. Done. Get a job, work for someone else. I'd given it my shot and it felt like I'd been beaten by hammers.

My friends and family wouldn't let me go. Chris Devlin drove me to physical therapy and to get my pain medication, while learning new *Razorcake* things. Josh Lane and Megan both pulled double duty with getting four months of issues finished on time. Brandy Vick came by and did my laundry without me asking. Designated Dale came by and hoofed the magazines up the stairs. My parents called every day, just to see if I was okay. All that stuff about making *Razorcake* a family, well it turned out to be true.

Day by day, my leg healed. It stopped looking like an eggplant. Months later, I could sleep without being woken up in the middle of the night from pain. Then I started walking with a cane.

Yesterday, I skated for the first time in five months. I was terrified, but I dropped in. My brain was concentrating: "fight or flight?" And the answer was, "Stay with it, you dumb sonofabitch. You like what you do." Sometimes, things need to get broken in two so they can fit together back together again. Thanks for the continued support.

—Todd

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"Whoever tries to imagine perfection simply reveals their own emptiness."

—George Orwell, from the essay, "Why Socialists Don't Believe in Fun"

This issue is dedicated to: Richard Anthony Manzullo (Bommer), Jason Kemper Sears, and Tom "Pig Champion" Roberts

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Annabella Brix Chanel

"Suck boob baby...YEAH!"

RAZORCAKE

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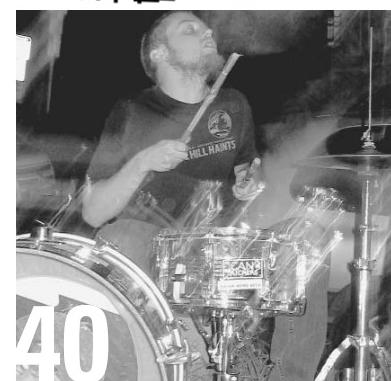


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"I was quickly approaching my sixteenth birthday with only a string of almost fireworks to my name"

Last Night at the Fair

Or How to Ruin a Perfectly Good Smiths Song



illustration by Cindy Tomczyk, www.cindytomczyk.com

The annual carnival at the local Catholic church was indistinguishable from any other carnival at the Los Angeles Archdiocese outposts that dot the neighborhoods of the San Fernando Valley. For forty-eight hours every October, the football field that was never actually used to play football on was transformed into a cramped model of an amusement park, tightly packed with rides that probably dated back at least two decades, food and game booths, and a stage to house the forced performances of nearly every school-aged child associated with the parish. The smells of Filipino, Mexican, Italian, Lebanese, and German foods combined with that of nearly one hundred varieties of all-American lard to form a cloud scented of something between delicious and noxious that floated to the top of the Monkey Cages, a positively evil cousin of the Ferris wheel that almost always broke while one hung upside down from the top of the circular track. The Irish step-dancers forced smiles as they moved straight-backed across the stage, little kids ran amok spreading their chicken pox, and adults guzzled beer and shoved brats down their throats in between cries of "Bingo!"

We went to the carnival every year, even after my friends and I had left the two-hall campus of the accompanying parochial school for slightly higher education, not because it was fun, but because we were bored. We were young and carefree in a city where an automobile means everything. Our options were limited, so limited that even the thought of averting our eyes from the lecherous stares of one-toothed carnies while waiting in line for rides in decrepit, metal death traps seemed exciting in comparison. We could go to the fair or we could go to the mall and spend the entire day reading a mix of literature and music magazines while trying to look half as cool as the book store clerk with the high-arched eyebrows. We could go to the fair or we could stand around the parking lot of the Granada Hills UA movie theater all night, watching crusty boys attempt a few ollies. We could go the fair or we could, um, actually, there really wasn't anything else we could do.

I went to that fair every year with my best friend Natalie and whoever else felt like accompanying us and watched the denizens of our neighborhood float past us glassy-eyed, as though moments away from the inevitable crash of a cotton candy high. Natalie would sit there in her plain shorts and T-shirt, peering from

behind a massive wave of dark brown hair as she twisted the fuzz on her arms into shrubbery, wondering if we would ever get boyfriends. I would pull the black nail polish from the lunchbox-shaped handbag that I referred to as my gothbox and attempt to minimize the hole in my tights while answering that it had to happen someday. Right? Then I would go back to humming a Smiths song and scanning the crowd for pasty-faced teenage boys.

I found inspiration in "Rusholme Ruffians," a Morrissey-penned tribute to the ecstasy and brutality of the carnival found on the first side of *Meat Is Murder*. At the carnival, people are beaten, and people fall in love, and one sad soul walks home alone by the end of the night. I didn't want to walk home alone, so I was going to find love at the carnival.

It almost happened at the beginning of our freshman year of high school. I met a boy, a sixteen-year-old from the local public high school who was so nerdy-cute that he could have been onstage playing accordion with The Might Be Giants. He took my friends and me for a joyride in his unmarked cop car, played Depeche Mode's "Somebody" on the piano in the unattended music room, and tried to convince me that German was the most romantic language. I told him that there was nothing romantic about Einstürzende Neubauten and, besides, German isn't derived from Latin. He made a few more passes and leaned over to kiss me. Then Natalie walked in.

"Liz, your mom is here. Um, sorry."

I think I stopped speaking to her for a week after that.

The following October, realizing that I was quickly approaching my sixteenth birthday with only a string of almost fireworks to my name, I decided to make another attempt at fulfilling the song-inspired fantasy. I was going to fall in love at the fair.

We will refer to him as the Phantom, an abbreviation of the nickname (the Phantom of White Oak) that was bestowed upon him by the local residents who watched as he paced up and down the tree-lined street that cut through our adjacent neighborhoods, basketball-player tall, and swathed in a full black trenchcoat while smoking one cigarette after another. He was the tormented sixteen-year-old author of many a Kerouac-inspired note passed across the tables of North Valley coffeehouses and the silent figure who launched a thousand suburban myths. Pale, lanky and well-read, he became my New Morrissey, the physical manifestation of a rock star crush that plagued my adolescence.

I knew of the Phantom by reputation only, as stories of his untouchable goth cool spread across the Catholic school circuit Valley-wide. Natalie, who went to school with him, thought he was weird, but that seemed to be my type, "So, why not?" Another friend of ours was as convinced that the Phantom and I should hook up, as she was convinced that Robert Smith was God.

"And, you know, I have this friend who is friends with him, so we can totally make it happen."

"Um, okay."

And so the Phantom and I officially met in the aforementioned movie theater parking lot with Natalie and the other friends there to make this look as though it was not some obvious attempt to link two eyeliner-wearing, self-proclaimed misfits searching for romance. The intentions of our friends were transparent, but the Phantom did not seem to mind. We drank coffee and smoked cigarettes while discussing the general state of our teen angst, peppering the conversation with names of bands, films, and authors that might lend to some sort of adolescent outsider credibility.

Weeks passed and our conversations grew in length, frequency, and number of pop culture references. We related emotions to lyrics from obscure British bands, discussed terribly boring films that were required viewing for teens with some sort of punk leanings, and dropped the name of authors so deeply associated with emotional and slightly pretentious high school students that the mere mention now would seem trite. We were unassuming caricatures of bored, right-brained youth slowly falling into something that could only be construed as the most sophomoric of teen romance stories.

I invited the Phantom to join Natalie and me at the carnival and carefully constructed a scenario in accordance with "Rusholme Ruffians." Would it be too much if I jumped to the front of the Ferris wheel line and screamed, "How quickly would I die/If I jumped from the top of the parachutes?" After no fewer than ten consecutive listens to the song through my Walkman, I realized that in order to truly reenact "Rusholme Ruffians" I would have to end the night solo, in true Morrissey fashion. Since a sad-sack ending defeated the entire purpose of the event, I knew that I must choose my Moz quotes carefully.

"The last night at the fair."

The song's opening line floated through my head without pause as we walked aimlessly amidst the crowd of legging-wearing mothers and flannel-shirted teens. The wind blew with every bit of the ferocity described in a Joan Didion essay we had to read for English class, whipping my hair across my face. I let my hair fly like that of a metal guitarist thrashing through a solo, saving my nervous energy to smooth and re-smooth the red plaid skirt that would flap and cling to my black tights with every step I took.

By the end of the day, the Phantom and I had ditched Natalie and the others to sneak a cigarette in the corridor by the church rectory. The jingle-jangle-bounce of the Smiths song played on repeat as I clumsily tapped the inverted filter of a Parliament. I twisted the soles of my green Doc Martens deep against the sidewalk, half-frightened that I might get caught with a cigarette, half-scared of what might happen next with this boy in the outside corridor of an empty elementary school right next to a statue of the Virgin Mary after he handed me his Siouxsie and the Banshees pin and I placed my Sex Pistols necklace around his neck.

The Phantom leaned over, the back of his trenchcoat expanding to cover both of us, and planted his too-thin lips against mine. It was my first real kiss, with the rush of first times and wind-induced static running straight down to my feet for a feeling that mimicked the excitement of my first Morrissey concert. I pulled away, opened the gothbox, and grabbed a pen. Then I pushed up the sleeve of his trenchcoat and scrawled "Liz" on his arm in faded blue ink.

"What was that for?"

"Go home and listen to *Meat Is Murder*. You'll figure it out."

Later on that night, after I spent two hours on the phone with Natalie describing the details of the kiss, I called the Phantom. His machine answered to the tune of "Rusholme Ruffians."

"Scratch my name on your arm with a fountain pen. This means, you really love me."

With that gesture, the Phantom and I had declared our complete devotion to one another. It lasted three months before we parted in a manner that might make the Morrissey/Marr split seem amicable. I don't remember exactly why I broke up with him, although it had something to do with him drunk-dialing me to say something fairly insulting. I remember that Natalie was at my house that day, sitting on my bed, and cheering me on as I called him back to tell him that he was an "asshole" and that I never wanted to see him again.

Soon, though, we ended up at the same high school, exchanging glares in the locker hall on a near-daily basis. His subsequent girlfriends, the one with the peanut-shaped head and the one with the pinched face slathered in orange-tinted foundation that I fondly referred to as "Ratface," prank called me incessantly. Then a mutual friend, the one who we swore spun a Wheel of Disease at the beginning of every week to decide which ailment she would use as a sympathy tool, related the rumors he had allegedly started about me.

"I turned him what?! If I did, then why is he messing around with Ratface?"

For those last two years of high school, I remained convinced that the Phantom had, with one outrageous statement, ruined any chance I had of dating again. And, for those two years, I had to fast-forward through "Rusholme Ruffians" every time I listened to *Meat Is Murder*. It wasn't that the song provoked some maudlin recollection, it just reminded me of how stupid I could be. Years later, I would learn that there exist far greater assholes than the Phantom and this incident would just become part of a series of fairly embarrassing episodes that I shouldn't share with others, but do because, after all, I did learn my lesson. Young love is fleeting, don't ruin a perfectly good Smiths song in the process.

-Liz Ohanesian

All names save for that of the author have been changed.



SHIZZVILLE



YOU ARE SUCH AN

ATTENTION WHORE!

YOU KNOW
WHO

JEEZ

VISHNU

BUDDAH

NEWS
RIOTS!
DEATH!



"If you're like me, you've probably wondered how Emilio Estevez ended up a punk rock icon."

I WAS A TEENAGE REPO MAN

When *Repo Man* was released in 1984, I worked for the rental and leasing department of a car dealership. My job was to wash the rental cars, but as my boss was a friend of my father's, he gave me all kinds of odd jobs to do, like going to the DMV and picking up his dry cleaning. My reward for these off-the-clock assignments was he'd let me take a car home for the night so I wouldn't have to rely on the bus. For a sixteen-year-old, it was like I'd died and gone to heaven. I drove a different car to school every morning. My favorite was a Buick Skyhawk station wagon that had the premium package. It looked like a soccer mom car but had a turbo-boost V6 engine with dual exhaust. It had been a lease car, but the customer returned it because it was too powerful. Sometimes my boss would ask me to drive him somewhere so that he could pick up a car for a lease client who was "out of the country" or wanted to "trade in his vehicle for a newer model." Usually, he took me out to dinner afterwards and asked me not to mention it to my father or, for that matter, anyone at the dealership. (Eventually, my father's friend was fired for embezzling. It seems he was funneling all kinds of vehicles through a phony corporation called "Mirage.") I didn't put the pieces together right away, but I figured it out: I was a teenage repo man.

When *Repo Man* the movie came out, I was kinda disappointed. I loved the punk angle, but didn't really get the whole sci-fi story, which takes over the movie so that by the end it's really just one long chase scene. Plus, Emilio Estevez really cheezed me off.

It wasn't until relatively recently that I "rediscovered" *Repo Man* and fell in love with it, mainly because of the music, the punk rock cameos, and, of course, Debbi. When it comes on TV or cable, I can't not watch it, even though I own it on DVD and have watched it dozens of times. Last summer, when I heard about the *Repo Man* Road Rally that was being held in downtown Los Angeles, I knew it was something I would have to check out.

The rally is the brainchild of Tim League, who owns the Alamo Drafthouse, an offbeat Texas movie theater that embarked on a 6,500-mile odyssey across America to show eleven classic movies on a giant forty foot by twenty foot inflatable screen in the places where they were filmed. To complement the screening of *Repo Man*, League organized a rally that was part trivia contest, part scav-

enger hunt. He bought a 1964 Chevy Malibu off eBay for three thousand dollars. Using dozens of clues based on the movie, fifty teams went off in search of the Malibu in the very same territory where the film had been shot. After the rally, there was a screening that was attended by the director Alex Cox and all the major stars from the movie.

My team didn't win the Malibu, but after participating in the rally, interviewing cast and crew members, and listening to what director Alex Cox had to say during the question and answer session, I learned a great deal about the movie:

1. Downtown Los Angeles Looks Exactly the Same.

Watching *Repo Man*, you get the impression that L.A. was a cheerless landscape of junkyards, industrial lots, and makeshift skid row shelters. It's still that way. Compared to the palm-studded, chlorine-bleached L.A. of *Fast Times at Ridgemont High* (1982), *Repo Man* feels like it was shot in a post-apocalyptic hellhole. But after roaming the area south of downtown for three or four hours, I was amazed by how little the landscape has changed in the twenty years since the movie was shot.

2. You really Can Go for a Joyride on the L.A. River.

Have you ever watched the scene where Bud (Harry Dean Stanton) takes Otto (Emilio Estevez) for a ride down the river and they get in a chase with the Rodriguez Brothers and thought to yourself, "Man, that looks like fun. I'd like to do that." Well, you can! Just under the 4th Street bridge is a long, narrow tunnel that leads directly to the L.A. River. It's not an area I recommend exploring on foot as there are usually a lot of homeless folks camped out under the bridge, but there aren't any fences or gates to prevent you from taking your vehicle for a ride down the river just like Bud, Otto, and the Terminator. Note: If you get caught and your vehicle is impounded, you didn't get this information from me.

3. Why Emilio?

If you're like me, you've probably wondered how Emilio Estevez ended up a punk rock icon. He doesn't look, act or talk like anyone I ever knew. (Though the scene where he pours beer on the floor is pretty rad.) I asked director Alex Cox, "Why Emilio Estevez?"

and he told me the studio was uneasy about handing over the reins to a first-time director and a rookie producer (Michael Nesmith, formerly of The Monkees) without a "star" in the lead. Originally, Cox had planned to cast Dick Rude, who plays Duke, the Cagney-esque leader of the outlaw punks, as Otto, but the studio put the kibosh on the idea. As a punk rocker, Estevez blows and was far better suited for the role he plays in *The Breakfast Club* (1985): a dumb jock. Over time, however, I've come to accept Estevez because if you think about it, Otto's story is about how he turns his back on punk rock. He spends the entire movie chasing a car: the perfect symbol for our consumer culture. He sheds his punk rock "gear" (what exactly is that tied to his leg?) and starts to dress like a square. In fact, Otto's arc, such as it is, can be seen as a rejection of punk rock ethos and attitudes as he strives to find a foothold in a culture rooted in materialism. If you look at this way, Estevez was perfectly cast.

4. Kevin Is a Jerk and a Weirdo.

Zander Schloss, the actor who plays Otto's friend Kevin, wasn't in the Circle Jerks when the movie came out, but he is now. Sometime after *Repo Man* was released and before the Circle Jerks' *Wonderful* album, he was invited to join the band. I've wondered for a long time if Keith Morris, who is a huge Weirdos fan, had anything to do with Zander getting the gig with the Weirdos. And, yes, that's really him singing a lounge version of "When the Shit Hits the Fan" that includes a hysterical "Shoobie-doo-wop! Say what? Yeah!" scat that prompts Otto to say, "I can't believe I used to like these guys." Be that as it may, Zander's performance as Kevin is so memorable he still gets asked to sing the sing "the 7-Up song" at gigs. Coup d'état, indeed.

5. Debbie Is Still Smoking Hot.

The one thing I regret about the rally is that I had an opportunity to ride with Jennifer Balgobin, the London-born actress who plays Debbi, the insanely hot punk rock chick with the mohawk, but I turned it down. When an old, scraggly haired Latino dude approached me and asked me if I wanted to ride with one of the original cast members, I politely declined. Had I known that this was Del Zamora, one of the Rodriguez Brothers, and

the cast member he was referring to was Jennifer, I would have jumped at the chance. I did, however, get a chance to talk to Jennifer. She still looks great, but she's traded her mohawk for eyeglasses. Jennifer told me that she never gets recognized and was thrilled to be among so many cast members, mingling and taking pictures with fans. Listening to her reminisce, I almost asked her if it was "too late for us to get romantically involved." I'm still kicking myself.

6. Why L.A.?

On the surface, it doesn't make sense. *Repo Man* director, Alex Cox, is an Englishman. Why not make a movie about the punk scene in London? Well, he did. It's called *Sid and Nancy*. But *Repo Man* came first. Alex Cox went to film school at UCLA and while there he worked for the General Motors Acceptance Corporation as—that's right—a repo man. It's pretty easy to imagine him driving around the city looking for nice cars while listening to shitty music.

7. Miller Is the Main Character of the Movie.

Miller (Tracey Walters), the repo man lot lizard who can't drive, steals the show virtually every time he opens his mouth. If you recall Bud's "Repo Code," which is part manifesto, part badge of honor, Miller is the only character who doesn't break it. Otto is a tool. Bud is a speed-snorting square obsessed with making people pay. The goons at the Helping Hand Acceptance Corporation prove to be no different from the punks responsible for the string of brazen liquor store hold-ups. Of all the characters in the movie, Miller is the only one whose motives are pure, which is why he is the one who gets the ultimate reward: the glowing Chevy Malibu that rockets into outer space (or, if you've been paying attention, back in time) at the film's finale.

8. The Best Line in the Film Almost Didn't Make It into the Movie.

Tracey Walters told me the line that gets quoted back to him the most is "the more you drive, the less intelligent you become." But the "lattice of coincidence" monologue that defines Miller's character and sets the tone for the whole movie wasn't even in shooting script: it was written as an audition piece. In fact, Walters had to fight Cox to include it in the movie. Walters convinced him to shoot it, but there was hardly any time as the light was quickly draining out of the sky. Walters nailed it in one take.

9. What's with the Generic Labels?

Viewers wrongly assume that Cox is making some kind of a statement with all the generic labels for food and beverages that are consumed or destroyed during the course of the movie. As incredible as it seems, these were in fact actual store-brand items from Ralph's. The only other beneficiary of product placement in *Repo Man* is the company that makes pine tree air fresheners, who donated thousands, thus prompting the line from Miller: "You find one in every car. You'll see."

10. *Repo Man* Was Years Ahead of Its Time.

Alex Cox will be the first to tell you that his movie borrows heavily from *Kiss Me Deadly* (1955), Robert Aldrich's adaptation of the Mickey Spillane novel about stolen nuclear materials. But dozens, if not hundreds, of directors have borrowed from *Repo Man*. For instance, everything about the mysterious contents of Marcellus Wallace's briefcase in Quentin Tarantino's *Pulp Fiction* (1994) is lifted from the trunk of the '64 Chevy. And the character Lite (Sy Richardson) established the template for Samuel Jackson's character in *Pulp Fiction* (and about half-dozen other movies afterwards). Chris Carter should be divvying up his residuals checks with Cox because without *Repo Man*, there could be no *X-Files*. Ditto *Napoleon Dynamite*, whose character comes directly from Kevin.

Repo Man is a funny movie. For one thing, it's impossible to classify. Is it a comedy? Sci-fi? Crime story? It's regarded as a punk rock movie but it's really not about punk rock at all, and if it was, we wouldn't trust it because it was made in 1983. It was

one of the first movies to be released on videocassette, and thus invented the formula for strengthening a movie's box office performance by getting the movie in the hands of its core audience, who might not otherwise have seen it. Sadly, it was also one of the last movies to have its soundtrack released on vinyl, but, man, what a record! *Repo Man* is too mainstream to be a cult film, and too edgy to ever get recognition as a film classic, but it will always live in a special place in the hearts of nostalgic punk rockers who yearn for a scene that never was.

—Jim Ruland



Illustration by Rob Ruelas



“Is this an interview or a game we’re playing?”

—Alice Cooper’s manager

Nardwuar Vs. Alice Cooper

Here is a phone interview I did a few years ago with Alice Cooper:

Nardwuar: Okay, hello.

Toby [Alice Cooper’s Manager]: Yeah, Nardwuar? It’s Toby, still. You just about ready? We’ve got about ten minutes or so.

Nardwuar: Ten minutes. Okay.

Toby: Because we have to leave for a flight to Montreal. I just want to make sure you know. When he says he’s gotta go, it’s ‘cause we gotta go. Heh heh heh heh heh...

Nardwuar: Okay, so I’ll have to be quick then.

Toby: Yeah, it may go a couple minutes, but he’ll let you know.

Nardwuar: Okay, give me a warning, if it’s two minutes or whatever.

Toby: Yeah. So hold on, the next thing you speak to will be Alice Cooper.

Nardwuar: Great!

Toby: Okay.

Alice Cooper: Hello?

Nardwuar: Hello

Alice Cooper: Hi.

Nardwuar: How are ya?

Alice Cooper: Okay, great.

Nardwuar: So, I guess first off, umm... Hey stoopid, who are you?

Alice Cooper: Heh heh heh heh heh. Now, wait a minute. How do I take that?

Nardwuar: Hey stoopid, how are you?

Alice Cooper: [silence]

Nardwuar: Who are you?

Alice Cooper: Are you talking to me?

Nardwuar: Yeah, I am. Maybe we should start over again, Alice, I guess. Hey stoopid, who are you?

Alice Cooper: I... [silence]

Toby [Alice Cooper’s Manager]: Hello.

Nardwuar: Hello.

Toby: It’s Toby.

Nardwuar: Hello, Toby.

Toby: What’s going on?

Nardwuar: No, I was just saying “Who are you?” to Alice Cooper and I was hoping he would say, “Alice Cooper.”

Toby: Yeah, but is this an interview or a game we’re playing?

Nardwuar: No, it’s like an interview. It’s like, “Who are you?” “Alice Cooper.”

Toby: Right. But we know that.

Nardwuar: Yeah, well, but I was hoping that he would be able to say that.

Toby: Pardon?

Nardwuar: I was hoping that he would be able to say that.

Toby: And why is that?

Nardwuar: Just because I begin interviews with, “Who are you?” so we can play it back on the radio and...

Toby: Oh, so this is taped.

Nardwuar: Right.

Toby: Nobody told us that this was being taped for a broadcast.

Nardwuar: Oh, yeah, for a broadcast and...

Toby: We were told this was for a magazine.

Nardwuar: This is for a magazine as well as for a broadcast.

Toby: Okay. Well, you see, we didn’t know that.

Nardwuar: Oh, okay. So I guess we should just start again then?

Toby: Okay, and what are we doing?

Nardwuar: I just said, “Who are you?” to Alice Cooper I was hoping that Alice Cooper would say, “Alice Cooper.”

Toby: Okay, and then what happens?

Nardwuar: Then I will ask some more questions.

Toby: Okay. Okay. [Off the phone]: He just wants you to introduce yourself on the tape... I’m sorry we didn’t get that... Okay, here you go.

Alice Cooper: Hello!

Nardwuar: So, Alice Cooper.

Alice Cooper: Okay, do it again.

Nardwuar: Hey stoopid, who are you?

Alice Cooper: [in scary voice] This is Alice Cooper.

Nardwuar: So, Alice, where were you on January 1st, 1994?

Alice Cooper: ‘94? January 1st, 1994? I didn’t do it, whatever it was.

Nardwuar: Weren’t you with Willie Nelson at Bill “Microsoft” Gates’ wedding?

Alice Cooper: No.

Nardwuar: No?

Alice Cooper: I never made it.

Nardwuar: You never did, but you were...

Alice Cooper: I was invited, and uhh, I got my invitation about two weeks after.

Nardwuar: How did you meet Bill Gates? Was that thr...

Alice Cooper: I have never met Bill Gates.

Nardwuar: How did you get invited? Was that thr...

Alice Cooper: I have no idea.

Nardwuar: Was that through golf?

“Is this an interview or a game we’re playing?”

—Alice Cooper’s manager

Alice Cooper: No. I never met Bill Gates. I didn’t even know who Bill Gates was until after I read it in *Time* magazine.

Nardwuar: But you were invited to his wedding?

Alice Cooper: Yeah. Isn’t that odd?

Nardwuar: He’s from Seattle, just like Chris Cornell.

Alice Cooper: I know—oh, there’s this cosmic connection there!

Nardwuar: And he’s a real co-conspirator on your *Last Temptation* record.

Alice Cooper: Yeah, he is. He is. But I don’t think Chris Cornell ever met Bill Gates.

Nardwuar: He might have been at the wedding...

Alice Cooper: Oh, wait a minute! They both have electricity in their house!

Nardwuar: So Alice, do you still keep in touch with your old golfing buddies Peter Falk and Mike Douglas at all?

Alice Cooper: [click...] [dial tone]

Nardwuar: Hello, Alice? Hello, Alice? Hello, Alice Cooper? Alice Cooper? Cooper?

Postscript: A few weeks *after* this interview, my friend Martin Strong told me that one should never ask Alice Cooper about golf, because the mere mention of that sport will make him hang up! But no one told me this *before* the interview! Not Toby, no one! I was really upset because I had a whole list of questions I wanted to ask Alice, especially about his ‘60s garage punk band The Spiders! (FYI: Yes, I would have still asked about golf, but that would have been my last question!) The frustrating thing is since this phone encounter with Alice I have read many interviews where he mentions and answers questions about golf! Go figure! In another weird twist of fate, Ronnie Barnett, bassmeister supreme of the band The Muffs, said that Toby once asked The Muffs if they wanted his managerial services! Ronnie said, “Hey! I know you from Nardwuar’s Alice Cooper interview!” Toby replied something to the effect of “Yeah. It’s too bad. We didn’t know where that interview was going!” Well, the Muffs didn’t sign with Toby and I’m still confused!

To hear this interview visit
www.nardwuar.com







MONSTER OF FUN

AMY ADOYZIE

“Joy is a currency all its own.”

Beer Tears of Joy

“I’m like Jesus,” I told Connie. “If Jesus was super stoked on PB&J.”

We were playing the “What if...” game and the hypothetical was this: Imagine that you, (insert your name), were a nation and the World Almanac folks were compiling facts about You, the country, and needed to know your main import and export. What would they be? What shapes the *economy* of You?

Without question, Connie’s main import is pot. What does Connie-country export the most? He responded enthusiastically, “Riffs.”

After an unscientific survey of friends, I wasn’t surprised to learn that the majority of my allies primarily import beer and export piss. Speaking in binary economic terms to learn more about my buddies was amazingly efficient. It had me feeling like the poor man’s metaphoric Alan Greenspan—which brings us back to why I’m like Christ, your lord and savior and junk. As a nation, my most popular import is the peanut butter and jelly sandwich and my super awesome export is joy. Aside from the fact that I never pass up an opportunity to commit blasphemy, it’s quite obvious from my Jesus-flavored joy export that my birthday has the potential of becoming another consumerific pseudo-holiday. Seriously, I’m like God’s 21st-century kid—born and raised Buddhist without a guilt complex.

Although I don’t have Christ-like magical powers, I can offer proof of my export with *The Effects of Emanating Joy*.

Joy Is the Color of Innocence

It was still early when the sun sunk below the horizon and we settled onto our stools to enjoy Harold’s happy hour. We gulped down two-dollar bottles of Bud as our friends began to trickle in to play a show at the working class San Pedro bar. Fose, who imports whiskey and exports beer, was chatting with a mustache that was attached to an older man in a plaid button-up. It sat there, a two-inch thick, gray bristle brush sprouted across check bones and jutted above an upper lip, wobbling on his face as he smiled. In the middle of their conversation about Alabama,

where Fose is from, Mustache Dude pointed to me and asked, “Well, what about your lady friend?”

“She cost me seven hundred dollars,” Fose answered. I grinned and nodded while Fose explained, “Got her off the internet. She’s from China.”

“Oh, the internet.” Mustache Dude was intrigued. His eyes beamed for a moment. “I wish I was better at the computers.”

“He got a good deal,” I said, without any hint of an accent.

“Yeah, I tell her if she wants to leave me, she better give me seven hundred bucks.”

“Have you been to Al-ah-bama?” Mustache Dude asked me, over-enunciating loudly.

“Yeah, I’ve been there.”

“What did you like the most about Al-ah-bama?”

“Waffle House!” I gushed excitedly.

The mustache heaved as a jolly chuckle escaped his round body.

Exporting joy grants me an aura of innocence, the type of wide-eyed naïveté that helped me pass for a seventeen-year-old in order to avoid a \$250 fine for riding the local train without the right fare—and two weeks later I wasn’t even carded when I visited a swinger’s club. Mustache Dude looked into my slanty brown eyes and saw the hopeful innocence of a girl living her dream with her illiterate construction worker owner/husband, shedding off another tiresome workweek with a few cheap beers on a Friday night.

He mimed his next question. “If you go back to Chi-nah,” his fingers drew a big square, “what would you,” points to me, “bring back as a soo-ven-air?” He used an awkward gesture that looked like he was stroking a football at both ends to represent “soo-ven-air.”

I thought for a moment and looked at Fose quizzically.

“Say it slower,” Fose told the Mustache Dude. He complied and repeated his question slower and mimed bigger.

I looked at him squarely, flashed a manic grin, and responded with, “Cheetos!”

His head arched back; the mustache swayed upward towards heaven as he choraled loudly in delight. At that moment, Mustache Dude existed in a reality where,

for the price of a 1985 Toyota, you could buy a young, dutiful, Asian bride who wants nothing more than a bag of twig-sized, simulated cheese-flavored crunchies. At that moment, despite our dishonesty and perpetuation of the icky sex trade industry, Mustache Dude had a half-full bottle of beer and a belly full of joy.

Joy Is the New Bling

Happily dizzy-drunk from our trip to the Hungry Tiger, we arrived at the bus stop a half hour after the last bus was scheduled. After having shared three fish-bowl sized drinks with Gus, who imports love and exports jive, I was in no mood for the forty-five minute walk home in the frigid Portland cold. Marah, Joni, and Gus stumbled ahead of me, beginning their trek as I stubbornly lagged behind.

“We should hitch a ride!” I suggested.

Before anyone could disagree, I twisted around and thrusted my gloved thumb at every pair of headlights that passed going our direction. But the cars kept moving. In vain, thumb out, in vain. Just as I was becoming discouraged, a shimmering bronze sedan slowed down and actually stopped. I walked over and peeked into the passenger window as it slowly crept down. A young woman in a cropped, fur-lined parka sat smiling in the passenger seat. She looked like a classed-up booty girl straight out of a generic hip-hop video.

“Are you *really* going to give us a ride?” I asked before bursting into a huge-mongus smile, flashing every tooth in my mouth. “We just need to go down the street.”

Her male counterpart was the driver. His eyes scanned over the four of us before saying, “You guys don’t look like you’re gonna rob me.”

Before I knew it, I opened the back door and we scrambled in.

We were passengers of Stephen Lee Ford (*not his real name*), who was both flattered and impressed that we didn’t fear climbing into a black man’s car. I remember his full name because he showed us his driver’s license in interest of full disclosure. We were also informed that he is an ex-con-vict—he was sent to prison for dealing crack, for which he apologized.



At that moment, Mustache Dude existed in a reality where, for the price of a 1985 Toyota, you could buy a young, dutiful, Asian bride who wants nothing more than a bag of twig-sized, simulated cheese-flavored crunchies.

"Yeah, I was dealin'." He shrugged. "I'm sorry."

"You did your time. It's cool." I tried to reassure him as he sped down SE 39th Ave.

"And attempted murder too."

"Oh..." The backseat troopers fell silent.

"These guys came into my house and tried to rob me, so I was defendin' myself," he explained. "And they ratted me out for dealin' to get a lesser sentence."

While he was telling us about his criminal past, he pulled into a convenience store lot where his girlfriend went in to buy him a bottle of pop.

I asked him a few questions about what they had been doing earlier that night, where they had just come from: friendly banter about our alcohol consumption and how we missed the last bus.

"I like you," he said, turning around in his seat to get a better look at me behind him. "You've got lots of questions." He stuck his hand out and shook mine. His head turned to the small storefront and nodded toward his girlfriend inside, "She's my sister."

Wink, wink.

Joy is a currency all its own. An atmosphere saturated with joy gives a feeling of openness and acceptance, regardless of cir-

cumstance. Granted, Stephen Lee had been drinking and was not exercising sound judgment in driving or revealing his criminal past, but he didn't give a shit because he was having a good time—hitting on the least likely urban booty girl candidate ever, ever.

Joy is the new bling.

I felt like we were making a connection, Stephen Lee and I, cutting through all of the -isms that plague our society with joy and crack-dealing confessions.

"Do you still deal?" I asked.

"Well..." He winced slightly and didn't answer completely.

"It's cool. You've gotta dibble and dabble." I don't know why I said that, but it seemed completely appropriate at the time.

"Don't call the cops," he joked.

All four of us exploded with a chorus of, "No way!" He felt confident enough about our refusal to involve law enforcement that he gave us his phone number.

After his girlfriend returned, we zoomed back south on SE 39th Ave. Beams of pale orange-yellow rays shot from street lamps and into the car, creating a strobe effect as we hurtled down the street. Stephen Lee asked us if we would have picked him up if we saw him hitching. We all euphemized

that we didn't have cars. I added that as a woman driving alone, I wouldn't give him a ride. He liked my honesty.

"Sorry about the shitty ride," he said. "My other car is a Lexus, but it's at home."

Our peanut gallery responded with another round of, "No way! This car rules!"

He got us home unscathed and asked us to recite the phone number he had given us earlier.

"Call me for anything!" he said before his car peeled away from the sidewalk. Perhaps he wanted to stay in touch because he got a taste of pure, unadulterated joy—and now the crack dealer is hooked. May there be a day where joy is sold freely to experimenting teenagers, bored housewives, and necktie schmoes. Until that time arrives, I shall be on the forefront, fighting all naysayers, negative Nellies, and the Man to bring you another shipment of joy.

-Amy Adoyzie
amyadoyzie@gmail.com



MY FIFTEENTH COLUMN FOR RAZORCAKE BY BEN SNAKEPIT

BY THE TIME YOU READ THIS, I WILL HAVE MOVED AWAY FROM AUSTIN, A TOWN THAT'S BEEN REALLY GOOD TO ME FOR THE PAST SIX YEARS. SO, FOR YOU, HERES THE...

SNAKE PIT SIX PACK TOUR OF AUSTIN!

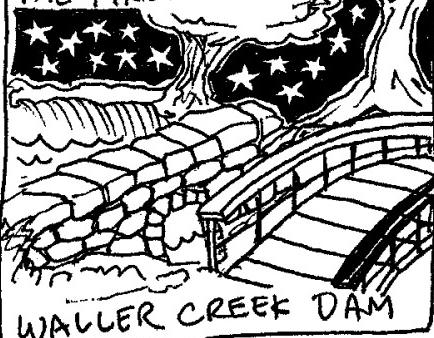
A SIXPACK TOUR IS PRETTY SIMPLE. ALL YOU NEED IS...



THERE ARE A FEW GOOD RULES OF ETIQUETTE TO FOLLOW...

1. IF YOU START, YOU MUST DO ALL SIX STOPS. NO CRAPPING OUT!
2. NO CELLPHONES!!
3. YOU GONA CARRY YOUR OWN BEER.
4. ONLY ONE BEER PER STOP!!

1) GO TO THE CORNER OF 45TH + AVENUE H IN HYDE PARK. BACK IN THE WOODS IS THE FIRST STOP...



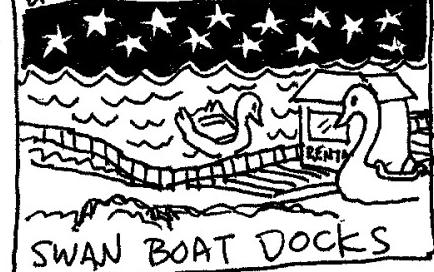
2) RIDE SOUTH ON DUVAL TIL IT DEAD ENDS AT DEEN KEETON, GO EAST UP THE HILL TIL YOU SEE A LITTLE PATH IN THE BAMBOOUST BEFORE BEANNA ST



3) GO BACK WESTON DEEN KEETON, TURN LEFT INTO THE U.T. CAMPUS, CUT THRU THE SECRET PATH BEHIND THE TENNIS COURTS, END UP ON RED RIVER, AND 8TH ST



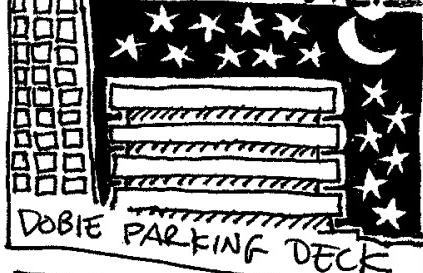
4) TAKE RED RIVER TO 6TH STREET. RIDE THRU THE DRUNK FRAT BOYS TO CONGRESS. GO UNDER THE CONGRESS AVE BRIDGE AT CESAR CHAVEZ.



5) RIDE ALONG THE BIKE PATH ON THE RIVER TIL YOU GET TO THE BIG POWER STATION, THEN TAKE A RIGHT UNDER THE BRIDGE, RIDE UP TIL YOU HIT 9TH STREET.



6) ITS SHITTY AND UPHILL FROM HERE, SO CUT OVER TO GUADALUPE AS SOON AS POSSIBLE, THEN RIDE UP TO THE FINAL STOP AT GUADALUPE + 21ST



THIS IS JUST ONE PARTICULARLY FUN ROUTE, BUT THERE ARE TONS + TONS OF VARIATIONS.



REMEMBER TO BE SAFE AND LOOK OUT FOR YOUR FRIENDS, ESPECIALLY IF YOU'RE RIDING AT NIGHT



"POLKA KICKS BLACK SABBATH'S ASS EIGHT DAYS A WEEK!!!"

LOVE, NØRB

REV. NØRB

SHARK, I HARDLY KNEW YE
or
CRUSHED BY THE TRUTH,
PART II

Although one tends to suspect this notion has been roundly circulated in certain quarters over the course of the last few years or so, i think it's high time i make it official: As of 12:52 AM CST 2.7.06, i, Rev. Nørb, have jumped the shark. That's right. I'm past my prime! Over the hill! Fonzie on waterskiis! Strictly from passéville, even! Sure, i figured out how to get the "ø" back into my name on a (gag) Windows-based operating system, but, dangit, it's still a case of tøø little, tøø late (in the course of my explorations, i also found out how to insert all manner of freaky symbols into my Word documents—i mean, if i'm feeling particularly debonair, i can even do an empty set with an accent mark ["?"], like i'm some kinda crazy geek hooker or something [seriously, at my day job, i deal with a lot of, uh, "escorts." All 100% law-abiding, i can assure you. Hey, i's just a legitimate businessperson! Anyway, i have to design ads for these crack-brains, and they always give themselves these crazy stupid hooker names like "Au-Sha" and "Chant'al" and "Xante" [er... wait a minute. That last one was actually the manufacturer of our printer. *Razorcake* regrets the error {as far as i can tell}], flinging accent marks and apostrophes this way and that, with absolutely no regard nor idea as to what the functional utility of said punctuation gizmo might be. In point of fact, if you ask, er, beg pardon, axe them if the little mark they've lovingly scrawled over their hooker name for the week is an accent mark [i.e., belongs over the letter] or an apostrophe [i.e., belongs after the letter, floatin' out in space], one is apt to be greeted with the same look of frozen panic as is generally reserved for parole officers dropping by unannounced for purposes of administering random drug tests. So, yeah, as far as i'm concerned, if i wanna live out the rest of my years being Rev. N?rb or even Rev. Nærb, i feel i should be humored, if for no other reason than to offset the great strain and anguish i am enduring from continually having to back up and un-correct this fucking computer every time i try to type "I" in lower case {i mean, this computer has some seriously esoteric shit available for insertion. You can insert friggin' Hebrew characters, for, uh, Christ's sake! You can insert Arabic characters, too. Huh. No wonder this thing is

always crashing {as i write this, the Arab world is still fuming over the cartoon some Danish dude drew depicting Mohammed with a bomb on his head. I'm not really big into bloodshed or anything, but, y'know, goddammit, i really cannot stand the conciliatory tone the world's leaders take on issues like these. I wanna see one world leader—just one—who's a big enough dick ((with a matched set of balls)) to stand up and say *you know what? EAT MY FUCKING ASS. EAT MY ASS WITH A FUCKING SPOON, YOU FUCKING PIECES OF FUCK!* We'll draw the goddammed prophet Mohammed with a bomb in his turban whenever we goddamn well please! We'll draw the fucker giving a 7-Up enema to Ronald McDonald while he sodomizes Saddam Hussein with a fucking Snickers bar if we feel like it! Who fucking cares what you like or don't like? What are you gonna do about it anyway? Blow yourselves up? YOU'RE ALREADY DOING THAT, YOU FUCKING PUKE ASS SHIT WIPES!!! YOU HAVE NO CARDS LEFT TO PLAY!!! WE'RE SICK OF YOUR INTOLERANT RELIGIOUS FANATIC SCHTICK!!! THAT ACT IS FUCKING PLAYED OUT AND THEN SOME!!! YOU FUCKERS JUMPED THE SHARK ABOUT TWO MILLENIUM AGO!!! Get fucking OVER yourselves, because once your disaffected youth discover that smoking pot and listening to rock and roll is a lot more fun than going to church, you're gonna be in a WORLD of hurt, and DON'T SAY WE DIDN'T WARN YOU!!!... of course, this is likely why i am not apt to hold public office in this life ((and also, if there really is a Mohammed, and he keeps notes on these sorts of things, why i'm apt to come back as a dung beetle in the next)))]. But, yes: Jumped the shark Rev. N?rb has (for the two of you who are unfamiliar with this phrase, "jumping the shark" indicates the point in time where some person, place, or thing ends its reign of greatness [or, in my case, uh... "somewhat okay-ness?"] and begins its descent into yucks/mediocrity/what-everitude, taking its name from the episode of *Happy Days* where Fonzie jumps over a shark on waterskiis [it's also the name of the new 88 MPH album, where, in the CD insert, the band, in comic strip form, literally jumps the shark in an alley. Hoot mon.] [sounds kinda like a cross between the first Leg Hounds {who, this past December, broke up without ever even getting NEAR the fucking shark} album and the Mutant Pop catalog. *Huh!*]) (and, while i'm up, you know what's really jumped the shark these

days? Sports. I mean, WHAT the FUCK is up with this recent madcap bevy of screwjob finishes? First, the NFL does everything in its power to give the Colts a victory over the Steelers in the playoffs, and, when that doesn't work, they somehow decide that fucking the Seahawks over four times in the Super Bowl constitutes a valid attempt at a "make-up call" on behalf of the Steelers. Now, a day later, i'm watching the NCAA officials pretty much hand the St. Mary's/Gonzaga game to the Bulldogs out of sympathy to Washington state over the Seahawks Super Bowl loss. I mean, what the hell's the point of even watching this crooked shit, when i could be watching a REAL fixed sport, like wrestling??!! [Oh well, congratulations to the Steelers for their Super Bowl victory. We hope the steel mills reopen sometime soon, so their fans will have other things to besides traveling to opponents' stadiums and gaily waving their urine-soaked Pittsburgh Pissrags about] [also, Adam Morrison of Gonzaga looks like my girlfriend's little brother. Ask me about how he eats Jell-O no-handed]. And whyfore and for how have i come to this soul-numbing conclusion of maximum woe (vs. Rade?) you axe? It's simple: After much soul-searching, i have made the shameful determination that i, Rev. N?rb, have lost the Spirit of Wrestling (long-time readers of my MRR column might remember that one of my early "career moments" was boldly proclaiming that NOFX's fatal flaw [amazingly, the fact that NOFX even had fatal flaws was not common knowledge at the time] was a complete and utter lack of The Spirit Of Wrestling [said quantity having been derived from Richard Meltzer's liner notes/essay of the same name which accompanied the Dictators glorious *Fuck 'Em If They Can't Take A Joke* album—one of my favorite live albums, ever, and probably my favorite hunk of rockcrit-spew extant]). Now, losing The Spirit Of Wr?ø??...—er, The Spirit of Wr????...—The Spirit of W?????... (this is supposed to be like the time Fonzie was wrong, but, when he tried to admit it, the word "wrong" came out "wruaugh-hghghghgh"? Well i never!] ...er, The Spirit of You-Know-What is a grave situation, and not to be confused with merely not following wrestling (i haven't followed wrestling since February 29th, 1992, when some friends and i went down to Milwaukee to witness some WCW pay-per-view event.

**Anybody who can
beat the shi t
out of a bunch
of Lynyrd
Skynyrd fans at
age fi fty-ni ne
wi thout even
taki ng hi s
unl i t ci gar out
of hi s mouth
COMMANDS YOUR
RESPECT! ! !**

**The Crusher,
gone to the big beer
hall in the sky**

1926-2006

illustration by Chris Larsen
chrisfingaz@aol.com



Lex Luger had the title, but we knew that he was leaving the WCW for the WWF [but had to spend the next year cooling his heels in the WBF, Vince McMahon's oiled-up steroid monkey pro bodybuilding league {a work of high genius topped only by his invention of the XFL}], and was therefore dropping the strap to Sting that night. Having never seen a title change hands in person before [more on that later], we were all pretty fired up about having our belt-swapping cherries popped, but, somehow, when Luger *did* drop the strap, the fact that i knew it was coming beyond the flimsiest shadow of a doubt rendered the whole ordeal gravely unsatisfying. Adding comedic insult to injury, some brain surgeon at the merch stand must have goofed up and forgot it was leap year, because they were selling WCW magazines cover dated "March 1st, 1992" on February 29th, in which a triumphant Ricky Steamboat dis-



cussed his winning the light heavyweight title from the [then not] late Brian Pillman in Milwaukee—which is funny because the match where Steamboat won the title *had yet to take place* at the time the magazine went on sale. So, yes: Something about going to a match and being able to buy a magazine already discussing the results of the matches you were there to see kind of rubbed me the wrong way. It wasn't because things were "fake" [WHAT??? IT'S FAKE??], per se, it was that things were... i dunno... dumb [WHAT??? IT'S DUMB??]. For whatever reason, i couldn't get into it any more after that. I forget where i'm going with this). *TO LOSE THE SPIRIT OF WRESTLING IS TO MISPLACE THE ETERNAL BELLOW OF THE IMMORTAL SOUL!! TO SHAMEFULLY DROP THE STRAP OF RIGHTEOUS CONTENTION!!! TO FRITTER AWAY THE GIFT OF CANTANKEROUS-*

NESS, AND TAP OUT ON BEHEST OF LIFE, THE MOST SHADY PROMOTER OF ALL!!! To lose The Spirit Of Wrestling is a shark-jump of leviathan proportions, and *i have done it*. As evidence of my loss (which, i imagine, you're having a terribly hard time coming to grips with), might i point out that the greatest wrestler of all time—Da One, Da Only, DA CRUSHER—recently passed away, and *i'm not even the first Razorcake columnist to eulogize him!* Geez! The Rhythm Chicken's in friggin' Poland and he was quicker out of the gate with the Crusher tributes than i was! But, i mean, Rhyth was right: The Crusher RULED. I, too, used to watch him wrestle with my grandma (he took her two out of three falls), although she was more of an Ivan Putski type at heart. But, come on, if there were no Crusher, there would be no "The Crusher" by the Novas! There might not even be a bolo punch! *How*

might mankind survive??? The last time I saw the Crusher wrestle, he (aided and abetted by his partner in crime, Dick the Bruiser [as name-dropped in the intro rap to the Dictators *Go Girl Crazy* elpee!]) beat the crap out of these longhaired southern rock shitkickers called the Fabulous Freebirds at the Brown County Arena in 1985, which would have put Da Crush at a sprightly **fifty-nine years of age** back then. *Anybody who can beat the shit out of a bunch of Lynyrd Skynyrd fans at age fifty-nine without even taking his unlit cigar out of his mouth COMMANDS YOUR RESPECT!!! RAT-A-TAT-TAT!!! RAT-A-TAT-TAT!!!* I saw Wisconsin's own Crusher spend an entire afternoon whipping future Minnesota governor Jesse "The Body" Ventura around the ring by his goatee, then, when he tired of that, Crush disconnected one of the twenty-foot metal poles from the crowd railing around ringside, and, at age fifty-seven or so, started beating on Ventura with *that*. THE CRUSHER WAS THE CLOSEST THING TO A TRUE DEMI-GOD (death to false demi-gods!) WISCONSIN HAS OR WILL EVER HAVE. WHY HE IS NOT ON THE STATE

AWA TAG-TEAM TITLE at the Arena one Sunday night. I go to work at my high-powered janitorial gig the next day, and one of the cleaning ladies is like "*Crusher won himself a title last night!*" and i'm like "NOOOOO!" and "YESSSSS!" at the same time! *A fifty-eight year old dude is walking around with half of the AWA tag team belts!!!*
**AND I MISSED IT!!! GAAAAAAA
AAAAAAHHHHHHHHHHHHH!!!** I mean, think of all the shit a wrestling fan had to go through in the antediluvian pre-pay-per-view era—all the skullduggery, the overturned title decisions, the pins when the ref was out somewhere getting coffee, the countouts and disqualifications where the title didn't change hands—you fuckin' NEVER got to see someone win a title. That would happen like once a year, in Denver or St. Paul or somewhere. **AND HERE MY FUCKIN' DUDE WINS A TITLE AT THE SAME ARENA MY HIGH SCHOOL GRADUATION WAS AT, AND I DIDN'T BOTHER TO PAY THE SIX BUCKS TO GO SEE HIM WIN IT!!!** Unbelievable. In any event, i was recently watching a Road Warriors DVD (the selfsame Road Warriors who would soon

but it's got the Rock & Roll Express on the cover. *Mmm, '80s!*). The reason i know, in my heart of hearts, that i have well and truly Jumped The Shark is because... well... i've been poring over this issue's load of reviewables (hey! Ya know what i noticed? My review of that dopey Tokyo Electron CD didn't make it into last issue. Well, what the heck?! Making me listen to, think about, then write about that thing [although, granted, "Mis Ojos" was pretty cool] and then *not printing it* was kinda like conniving me into starring in a video wherein i eat my own poop, then not getting the negatives developed! Dangit all to heck, this whole Tokyo Electron thing cannot help but indicate that WE NEED SOME MORE RULES in punk rock, and, to this effect, might i confidently state that as of **ONE MINUTE PRIOR** to the time when Tokyo Electron thought of their name, **THERE CAN BE NO MORE BANDS WITH THE WORD "TOKYO" IN THEIR NAME. EVER.** Along these same lines, retroactive to exactly **ONE MINUTE AFTER** the Chinese Telephones thought of their name, there can be no more bands with the word "Chinese" in their name, either [i allow the Chinese

Get fucking OVER yourselves, because once your
diseased youth discover that smoking pot and
listening to rock and roll is a lot more fun than
going to church, you're gonna be in a WORLD of hurt.

QUARTER IS BEYOND ME (live wrestling cards in Green Bay, back in the AWA days, were always on Sundays. I assume this was a function of the Minneapolis-based promotion either heading back home after Chicago/Milwaukee on Friday/Saturday, or heading out on the road after kicking things off in the Twin Cities on the weekend. The cards on Sunday afternoons, for whatever reason, were always better than the cards on Sunday nights [probably because a Sunday night slot indicated that the bouts were following an afternoon of that quintessential Titletown sacrament—football—and were thusly devalued by comparison]. I saw a ton of great AWA matches at the Arena in '80s—better than anything i'd see when Verne Gagne [also mentioned, though far less deservedly, on the Dictators *Go Girl Crazy* album] ran the promotion into the ground [beginning when he was too fucking addlepated/constipated to let Hulk Hogan win the belt when he was in the AWA, causing Hogan's jump to the WWF and the rest is history] and the NWA/WCW and WWF swooped in to try and pick up the pieces, but the Sunday night cards were always pretty half-hearted affairs by comparison, so i wouldn't always go. So, of course, what happens on, like, the ONE time i don't go to wrestling in like a three or four year period? Exactly. The Crusher, with the capable assistance of Baron Von Raschke, WINS THE

relieve Crusher 'n' Baron of the straps), and Road Warrior Animal—whose team used to storm the ring to the lilting strains of "Iron Man"—was making fun of Crusher and Bruiser for having "The Beer Barrel Polka" being their ring-entrance music. Well, not to put too fine a point on it, but *FUCK YOU, ROAD WARRIOR ANIMAL!!! POLKA KICKS BLACK SABBATH'S ASS EIGHT DAYS A WEEK!!!* But I digress. The grounds for my self-proclaimed shark-jumping have nothing to do with my being late out of the gate to heap well-deserved praise on Da Crusher (although I suppose I could head things off at the pass by jumping on the I Miss Al Lewis bandwagon a little early); nor does it even revolve around my poor decision some twenty-two years ago to forgo attending wrestling the night Crusher won the tag-team championship in Green Bay (my sin is somewhat counteracted by a letter I had published in *Pro Wrestling Illustrated* in 1986, taking them to task for an article on a wrestling supercard held in Comiskey Park that they claimed "featured no less than eight present or former AWA, NWA, or WWF champions." I had quickly done the math, and realized that they had failed to count the Crusher—three-time AWA World Champion in the sixties—among them. They ran my letter with the title "**CRUSHED BY THE TRUTH,**" and attributed it to "Norbert Elmo." I don't know what issue number it is,

Telephones to be grandfathered because i don't care to be knocked ass-over-teakettle by the Lone Mosher again]. The only exception to this rule regulating the spread of overused '00s clichés [does that make our current decade the "double nuthins?""] would be if the perpetrators combine their current clichés with those of the last even-numbered decade, the '80s—therefore, a band name like "Red Chinese Social Moral Tokyo Youth" would be acceptable. *Even numbered decade punk rock band name clichés UNITE!*), and, after some moments of protracted soul-searching involving the *The Essential Pansy Division* collection (which, if you think like i think, you'd initially figure would contain their fifteen-second magnum opus "Two Way Ass" and then a lot of shiny, unused aluminum), i have come to the conclusion that Pansy Division's "Bad Boyfriend" video is really c???. Wait, that didn't come out right, i meant C??L. You know, the word that rhymes with "tool." C???. Damn. I can't say it. Never mind. I RETRACT ALL SELF-INFILCTED ALLEGATIONS OF SHARK-JUMPERY AND OTHER GRAVE PECCADILLOS!!! *THE SPIRIT OF WRESTLING LIVES WITHIN ME!!! EVERYBODY DIE!!! RAT-A-TAT-TAT!!! RAT-A-TAT-TAT!!!* Sorry for the confusion.

Løve,
Nørb



THE DINGHOLE REPORTS

RHYTHM CHICKEN

The Dinghole Reports
By the Rhythm Chicken
(Commentary by Francis Funyuns)
[Edited by Dr. Sagnarf]

(Good morning, punk rock America. It's me, Francis Funyuns. This may seem quite unorthodox, but it looks like the Doctor and I must cover for our feathered friend, The Rhythm Chicken, this time around. I just received a rather disturbing phone call from Todd at Razorcake HQ. It seems the Chicken has missed his deadline for turning in this issue's Dinghole Reports. All attempts to reach him have failed. Personally, I think he's just passed out in some Polish dungeon. -F.F.)

[Funyuns, you seem all to eager to grab the reins of this here literary stagecoach of chaos. I, on the other hand, am fearful for our misplaced hero. When last I saw him, he delivered me to the Krakow airport and then staggered into the woods with a bag of beer. What if he's frozen to death in some Polish trench or was abducted into the elusive world of Russian sex slaves? -Dr. S.]

(Actually, I think he might enjoy that all too much... er, the Russian sex slave part, not the freezing to death part. First of all, he's a die-hard Wisconsinite. He's not gonna freeze to death in the tropical Polish winter. Secondly, I really don't think there's much cause to worry. We have to look at what we DO know, and go from there. We know he's not answering our ham radio transmissions. That's not all too surprising, since we just poke fun at him anyway. And if he HAS been imbibing more than usual lately, then I would think his body would be properly pickled through any frozen stages he may experience. -F.F.)

[You're right. Let's work with what we DO know. I have here the last email I received from our AWOL Chicken. I received it Jan. 4th, and haven't heard from him since. Well, here it is. -Dr. S.]

Hey Good Doctor!

How's that Door County winter treating you? I gotta tell you about my New Year's Eve! I attended the huge concert in Krakow's main square. Imagine two NFL-sized football fields side-by-side. Now imagine 50,000 screaming Poles, each with a bottle of cheap Russian champagne, squeezed in there. There was a totally enormous rock stage set up in one corner with a production level beyond comprehension. All of Poland's big rock acts were there. (That's actually funny, in case you didn't know.) Anyway, it was chaos. There were drunken Poles dancing ON TOP of the

port-a-potties. It was actually pretty cool, having an OUTDOOR concert on a Polish winter night. You could see the performers' breath, and they were all wearing winter coats on stage. Well, midnight came and the fireworks show was far beyond anything I've ever seen back home. I guess it's the naive American in me that just assumed OUR fireworks displays were the best (July 4th and all that). Well, the Poles, of all people, got us beat. So, as soon as the mind-blowing fireworks display came to a close I heard the 50,000 roar in unison just as it happened. EVERYONE smashed their champagne bottles on the ground. Ever wonder why those festivals at home only serve beer in plastic cups? Around two AM, the concert ended and the square emptied out. I walked around on top of the three to five inches of broken glass EVERYWHERE! Seriously, it was a desert of broken glass! The local news reported that they cleaned up thirty tons of broken glass from the square. Sheer Zaniness! I retired to my favorite Irish Pub and soaked up some Polski brews till five AM.

You and I know that New Year's Eve is sort of "amateur night" from a drinker's standpoint, so I was more of a mildly sloshy spectator most of the night. I was almost to my apartment block when I passed the local neighborhood "commie drinking den." Five well-dressed gentlemen out front called me over and asked me to help them finish their vodka. I tried politely backing out from their offer, but they heard my broken Polish and I was a goner! Once realizing I was an American, they joyously pulled me inside and I found myself downing shot after shot of quality Polish vodka with my new neighborhood friends. I finally made it to my couch by around nine AM and woke up Jan. 2nd! If that's how 2006 is starting for me, then I'm afraid to see how it's gonna end!

Yours in Ruckus, RC

p.s. Remember the time when Terry approached the bartender in all innocence and asked, "Can I have forty shots of gin, please?" Then the bartender could only FIND twenty-one shot glasses! Blackjack!

[So, that was his state of mind on Jan. 4th. I know he was never much of a vodka drinker, but maybe that has changed. The Polish vodka IS second to none. See what happens when he has no access to a healthy steady supply of Pabst, Blatz, or Schlitz? -Dr. S.]

(That's strange how he actually attempted to stay somewhat sober on New Year's Eve. Remember Dec. 31st, 1999? I seem to recall a VERY SHIT-FACED Chicken rolling around

"The local news reported that they cleaned up thirty tons of broken glass from the square."

on Main Street in Green Bay, wrestling with Timebomb Tom as a cop car simply pulled around them and rolled on! -F.F.)

[And a few years later he played at the stroke of midnight at Milwaukee's Riverwest Commons, causing much discomfort in the pit! At least he didn't wake up in some drunk tank in Indiana! -Dr. S.]

(Maybe he's found himself in some drunk tank in Poland. That would be bad news. It WOULD explain his lack of correspondence lately. You know, it wouldn't be the first time! -F.F.)

[Mr. Funyuns, I think you're jumping to conclusions. We don't even know if Krakow has a "drunk tank." From what I've seen, if they DID have one, it would never be big enough! What else do we know? Have YOU received any emails from him lately? -Dr. S.]

(As a matter of fact, I got this one from his Ruckusness last week. Maybe this will give us some more clues as to his whereabouts. -F.F.)

Senior Frankie Funnypants!

How's Brewcity treating ya, buddy? I've been recently brought up to date with all my Milwaukee gossip. Erin and Carrie from the "County Clare" were here last week, and it was like an old-fashioned Wisconsin extended-weekend bender! Yikes! After a stunning performance at the Filharmonia, I zoomed out to the airport and brought them back to my place. It was already too late to head downtown, so we had a few Polski brews at my pad, then sauntered over to my neighborhood "commie drinking den." This place is a real relic from "former times." Imagine a spacious, eerie cement room with dusty curtains and a few tables and chairs, and cheap beer. Well, as soon as we walked in, a table of very drunken fellows hollered out my name. They were the gentlemen I had met on New Year's Eve, and they were much less sober this time! They saw Erin and Carrie walk in behind me and began yelling "KOBIECIE AMERYKANSKIE!" (American ladies!) One of them stumbled up to Erin and (almost drooling) kissed her hand, spewing out an endless diatribe of slurred Polish ramblings. A real Polish Casanova! The bartender told me she was closing up, but I could buy a bag of beer if I wanted. There really is a certain indescribable beauty in the Polish bag of beer! My bag was filled with cans of Zywiec and we were headed back to my cement nest.

The next day, "tea time" came early, and we had a good head start on that day's beering. By midnight we found ourselves staggering

into some French-style café and there at the bar was the most amazingly passed out guy I've ever seen. Some British soldier simply couldn't handle his "tea!" I approached the counter to secure our brewskis and the bartender's English sounded a little too familiar. He was from Milwaukee! That explains the British soldier's demise. Well, he kept us fellow Wisconsinites well supplied with Zywiec and a few too many shots of Polish highlander herb-vodka. I assume we took a cab back to my nest, because that's where we woke up the next day.

That next night was their last in Krakow, so we decided it made sense to simply drink up until they caught their plane back to Ireland at five AM, of course. We staggered around the Old Town, hopping from cellar pub to cellar pub, claiming beer glasses and ashtrays along the way as our spoils of war. Somehow, we ended up back at my place again by three AM and they frantically packed their ill-gotten booty. Minutes later, we were at my tram stop, waiting for the first tram of the morning. It arrived and Erin and I hopped aboard, but Carrie stayed outside for one more drag of her cigarette. The door closed and we started rolling away without her! After getting off at the next stop and running back to reclaim our lost soldier, we caught the next tram downtown with mere seconds to spare before we caught the last possible bus to the airport. At the airport, they checked in with minutes to spare. The Polish check-in guy leans over to me and says, "Maybe they should have no more beer in Poland." And he was quite serious! Yikes!

Somehow, they caught their plane and I was back home in bed by six AM. My door buzzer rang at noon and I answered the door in my boxer shorts. There stood two altar boys in their white smocks. I was in no mood to speak Polish, and they knew only one word in English, "Charge." I gathered they were collecting donations (as if the Catholic Church needs it) so I played the dumb American (played?). I fell back into bed somewhat bewildered, wondering if the Catholic Church is now accepting Visa or Master Card.

Yours in Ruckus, RC

p.s. Remember the time Terry actually bought a round of gin shots with some sparkly rocks? Buying a round of shots with rocks. That man's a genius.

p.p.s. I'm including a photo of our British friend, Benny Hill on the rocks!

[See, he mentions vodka again. I think Poland has finally sucked him into the belly of THEIR beast, the fermented juice of their blessed fruit, the potato! Also, that race to the airport sounds all too familiar to my mad dash out there with him. I can't imagine the Chicken trying to coral two drunken Wisconsin ladies across Krakow at three AM. Sounds like they made it, though. -Dr. S.]

(This is ridiculous. Who are we kidding? He's just passed out somewhere, or in the middle of some Eastern European extended bender. You and I both know that ol' Chicken Liver can handle himself (well, up to twenty free beers, anyway!). I suspect that he's just hiding, afraid



photo by Kris Tripplaar

to turn in a Dinghole Report with no new ruckus again! -F.F.)

[That could very well be. I'm sure if he HAD unleashed some new ruckus, he would've mentioned it in these emails. Instead, he's just weaning us off the ruckus with tales of drunken buffoonery. Seriously, I don't know how much longer Todd will put up with this. Do you think that maybe he's testing US here, seeing if we can carry the load? Maybe the Chicken is out, and next issue it will be "The Waiting Room" with Dr. Sicnarf! -Dr. S.]

(Don't flatter yourself, Doc. I'm sure it would be more like "Making New Friends with Francis Funyuns"! Oh wait! I just got an email! Let's have a look. -F.F.)

Cheers Funky Francine!
FUCK FUCK FUCK! This Bike Is a

Pipebomb are playing here tomorrow night! Finally! A good punk rock show in Krakow! And wouldn't you know it, tomorrow I fly to Italy for twelve days! FUCK FUCK FUCK! If my tickets were refundable I would stay here and shower them with vodka, but I got a date with a corkscrew. Ciao! RC

p.s. Remember the time Terry... oops! I just spilled my vodka! (slurp, slurp...)

[Well, at least we know he's still kicking. Maybe an Italian vacation is just the rejuvenation he needs. -Dr. S.]

(Yeah, I guess... as long as he doesn't end up on some talk show. -F.F.)

-Francis Funyuns & Dr. Sicnarf





"If you can't laugh at yourself, you have no business laughing at anyone."

KONNICHIWA

"I'm Rick James, bitch!"

That phrase was going in the direction of being beat to death as much as those annoying "Wassup!" commercials that were shoved up everyone's ass some years back. Most remember those insipid TV spots courtesy of Anheuser-Busch's campaign for Budweiser, and with nerve-grating product placement like that, it's all the more reason to love TiVo, as well as telling that line-spewing "life of the party" to put a sock in it. Even Dave himself soon grew tiresome of the phrase's popularity and told audience members who yelled it out to "shut the fuck up." For every person trying their funniest attempt (re: *lamest*) to impersonate Dave Chappelle impersonating Rick James, there were dozens more sketches on *Chappelle's Show* that brought literal tears of laughter running down my face, with times to the point that I couldn't even breath. Don't get me wrong—the "True Hollywood Stories" with Charlie Murphy's (semi-true, actually) take on Rick James is one of the many classic bits taken from *Chappelle's Show*, but, like the Ramones, there's more to the whole shebang than just "I Wanna Be Sedated", ya know?

Chappelle is definitely a multi-facet of talent, and *Chappelle's Show* is undoubtedly the crown jewel in his crown of comedic genius that television has been fortunate enough to host in quite a number of years. In fact, Dave's show harks back to the days of pioneering show hits like *All in the Family* and *Good Times*. These shows, with their respective developer, Norman Lear, pushing the envelope to the edge, didn't puss out when it came to dealing with real life issues, delving into topics such as political scandal (that's a double adjective), gang involvement, alcohol/drug abuse, child/spousal abuse, rape, and most memorably, racism.

The way that *All in the Family* and *Good Times* portrayed the way racism was (and unfortunately still is) prevalent in society was some pretty heavy shit to be airing during primetime slots on a major television network. Remember that this was the early to mid '70s and TV networks in general never even *thought* of touching the racism issue with a ten-foot pole. As intense or blatant the racism situations got on these two shows, they were always handled with well-targeted, comical demeanor, and yet left the viewer with some-

thing to think about at the show's thirty-minute end: a moral to the story to reflect upon, no matter which side of the fence you saw yourself sitting. With *Chappelle's Show* debuting in 2003, Dave took that comical demeanor discussed above, jammed it with a gang of steroids, and cut it loose across his sketch comedy, resulting in one of the most hysterically funny shows I've seen in many, many years.

To his credit, Chappelle has been at the comedy game for a long while now. Born August 24th, 1973 in Washington, D.C., Chappelle sprouted up in Silver Spring, Maryland and later on in Yellow Springs, Ohio, where his father was a professor who taught music and voice at Antioch College. Once his parents split up, Chappelle moved back to Washington, D.C. with his mother, who was an ordained Unitarian minister. He finished out high school back in his native D.C., but spent his summers with his father in Yellow Springs. It was then, in his high school years when Chappelle was feverishly scratching his stand-up itch, that his mother often accompanying him to gigs. Determined to get in on the act his own way, Dave waded through the trenches of Hollywood, having parts in over fifteen motion pictures and an assload of television appearances.

Fortune was about to smile with a cable network (Comedy Central) offering Dave an opportunity to exhibit his comical chops. That program ended up being *Chappelle's Show*, which Dave is a writer and executive producer of. Neal Brennan, Chappelle's best friend, often co-writes for the show, as well as Charlie Murphy (Eddie's older brother). Dave's take on racial themes on the show go beyond what's considered downright funny, enough to make anyone with a weak bladder pee themselves like a scared three-year-old. If you've seen any episode of *Chappelle's Show*, you know exactly what I'm getting at. Some of my favorite sketches include:

Frontline: The Life of Clayton Bigsby: (played by Chappelle), a biography of a blind "white supremacist" who is not aware that he is actually a black man. This sketch was in the opening episode of the first season and helped Chappelle gain significant notoriety for the way that the sketch gratuitously used the word "nigger" (mostly spoken by Chappelle's character). The character is based on Chappelle's

grandfather and is also one of the most "violent" sketches, involving a man's head randomly exploding while in shock. As rough around the edges this controversial sketch was, no one could deny the fact on just how humorous it came across as it made you *think* after watching.

Tyrone Biggums: These sketches involve a character named Tyrone Biggums, a pasty-lipped, skull cap-wearing crack cocaine addict with a high-pitched voice who once gave a graphic speech about drugs to young elementary school kids. Tyrone's character was also in a "Red Balls" energy drink ad, a contestant on Fear Factor, and was duped into an intervention by reading a phony flyer that promised a "5 o'clock Free Crack Giveaway." One of Chappelle's most beloved characters.

Reparations for Slavery: This sketch is one of the most brilliant pieces of Dave's work, in my opinion. It sets the scene of what would happen across the country if millions and millions of dollars were paid to African Americans as reparation for their own past relatives being slaves over two hundred years ago. All I can say is that Dave Chappelle as a white man reporting the news has got to be one of the funniest fucking things in the world (Dave also played the same character as the white representative in *The Racial Draft* sketch). His portrayal in this reparation sketch as the world's richest black man, Tron, is fantastic as well. Tron's reoccurring role in Chappelle's version of *The Real World* is also top notch ("Get outta my face, nigga! I'm makin' juice!").

The Playa Hater's Ball: Features Dave and Co. as vicious, foul-mouthed scumbags, each vying for the top position of "Playa Hater of the Year" by insulting each other. Dave's Silky Johnston character is well known for his straightforward and meticulous speech, and some of the one-liners in this sketch are unforgettable.

Celebrities besides Rick James don't slide so quietly by Chappelle, either. Some of his impressions of celebrities include Prince and the Revolution, rapper Lil' Jon, P. Diddy, Samuel Jackson, Gallagher ("Black Gallagher, bitch!"), Nat King Cole, Nelson Mandela, and even that douchebag R. Kelly (the guy who laughed all the way to the bank with his ridiculous *In the Closet* song/video series this past

year). *Chappelle's Show* had Dave starring in a music video as R. Kelly, boasting about his sexual fetish for urinating on women while having sex with them, aptly titled "Piss on You." The segment also featured a "remix" of the song, which has R. Kelly talking frankly about his perverse sexual fetish regarding defecating on women. The sketch was popular and helped fuel viewer interest in the show due to the real R. Kelly's own legal problems regarding inappropriate acts with underage girls (which included him videotaping himself defecating on them). Dave made a stand up joke about R. Kelly being ticked off by this spoof, which prompted him to ask Dave, "Nigga how you gonna make a video about peeing on somebody?" to which Dave responded "Nigga, how are you gonna make a video about peeing on somebody?" Another funny sidenote is on the end credits of Dave's "video"—the director is Chuck Berry (I'm way too much a fan to be knowing this, so look it up if you don't get it).

Besides writer Charlie Murphy contributing his Prince and Rick James sketches, there was a seasoned veteran who has contributed as well as appeared on *Chappelle's Show*: former Richard Pryor writer Paul Mooney. Paul adlibs answers to questions about black people from both famous and anonymous white people, usually about common stereotypes. His deadpan approach is half the reason why Mooney's input on the show has been so successful. In the second season, Paul replaced this with Negrodamus, an African American version of Nostradamus in which he adlibbed answers to life's most unsolvable mysteries such as "Why do white people love Wayne Brady?" (Answer: "Because Wayne Brady makes Bryant Gumbel look like Malcolm X.")

A popular reoccurring joke is the show's set designer, Karl Lake, doing the robot dance. It was performed in a barbershop, club, courtroom, and opening crowd shot of the show, amongst other places in various sketches. Don't ask me why, but every time Karl's spotted on the show doing the robot, there's something about that shit that makes me laugh out loud: an added perk, if you will.

But things started taking an unknown turn in the future of Dave's show. After the huge success of the first two seasons, the third season of *Chappelle's Show* was scheduled to air in February of 2005. This date was pushed back to May 2005 when production fell behind schedule back in December, 2004 because Dave had succumbed to a bad bout with the flu. On May 4, 2005, just weeks before the anticipated premiere, Comedy Central announced that *Chappelle's Show* would not be ready by the announced date and that production had been suspended "until further notice." No reason for the delay was given and there was no response from Chappelle, although one week later it was reported that Dave had previously flown to South Africa on April 28th to stay in an undisclosed psychiatric facility.

On May 14th, *Time* magazine announced that one of their reporters had interviewed Chappelle in South Africa, and that no psychiatric treatments were occurring or necessary. Dave returned shortly to the states, nipping rumors of psychiatric or substance abuse problems, and emphasized that his trip was a "spiritual retreat" intended to keep his sense of reality outside the bubble of intense pressure and

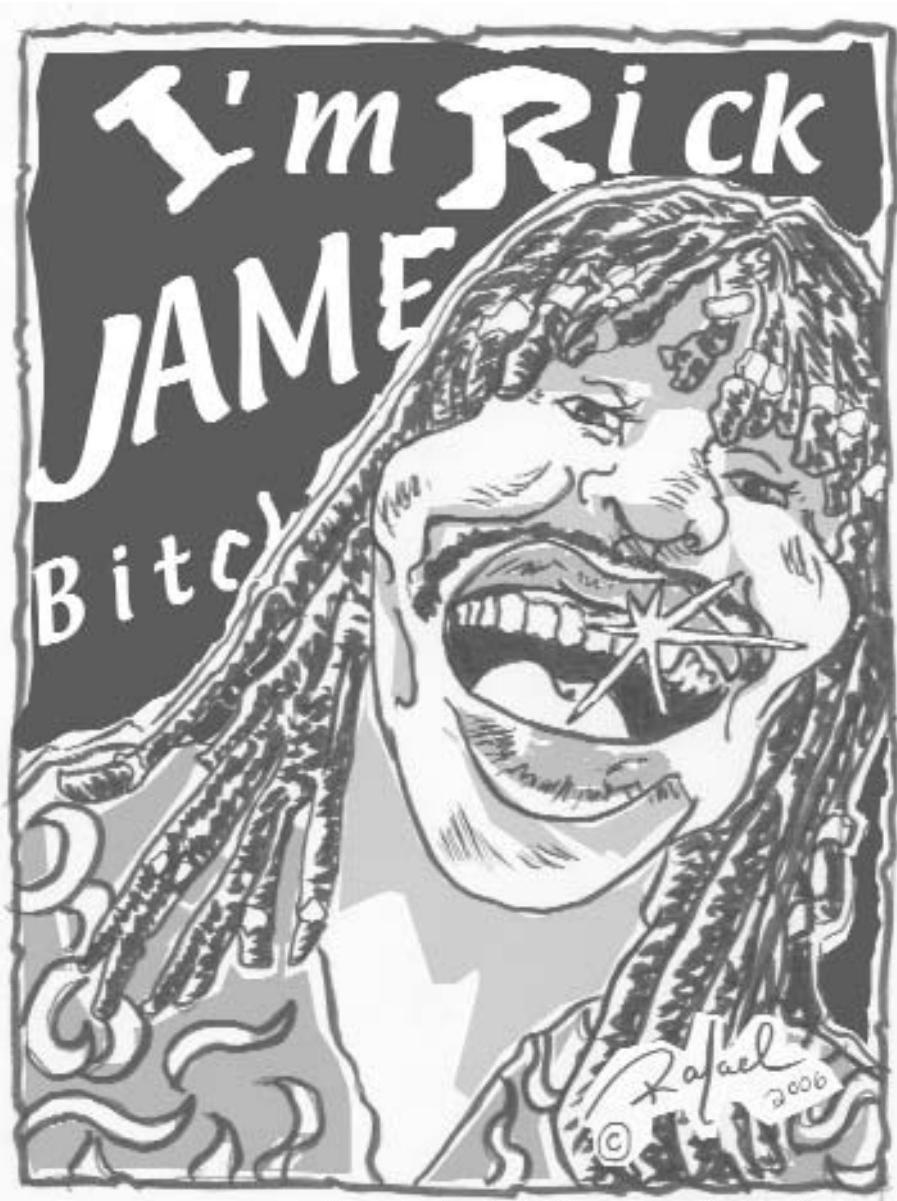


Illustration by Rafael Avila • www.graythumbstudios.com

fame, not to mention to keeping his humor fresh. Upon returning home to his wife and two sons in Yellow Springs, Ohio, Chappelle has had a successful series of surprise performances at small comedy clubs near his home.

The DVD box sets for seasons one and two of *Chappelle's Show* have sold extremely well, with Season One being the best-selling TV show on DVD of all time, beating out *The Simpsons* (The motherfucking *Simpsons!*). Amid all the delays and rumors, *Chappelle's Show* will be back for a third season in 2006 on Comedy Central, but there is still an air of uncertainty that I can only hope is cleared by the time this goes to print—only four new episodes will be aired. The announcement of the show's return was made on Comedy Central's *Last Laugh '05* year-end special, and a preview trailer was shown, featuring parodies of Lil' Jon, *MTV Cribs*, Alf (yikes), and Michael Jackson. In addition, actress Susan Sarandon also pops in for a cameo. Charlie Murphy has mentioned that there will be a short skit called "Monsters Inc." in which

Chappelle and Murphy will portray black versions of Halloween monsters created by black mad scientists. Now that is gonna be interesting. More than twenty sketches will be shown in all four episodes, including an election advertisement, a Chappelle cereal, and a parody of the *Super Size Me* documentary. Whether or not he returns to his full time production of *Chappelle's Show*, Dave has accomplished one hell of a job of making people all over the country laugh their asses silly within the course of two short television seasons. If, for some reason, Chappelle decides not to return with his show in full force, you have to thank 'em for one of the most important lessons one can learn in life: if you can't laugh at yourself, you have no business laughing at anyone. Konnichiwa, bitches.

**I'm Against It
-Designated Dale**
designateddale@yahoo.com



WON TON NOT NOW

FOR SHINO BY KIYOSHI NAKAZAWA

PEOPLE SOMETIMES ASK ME TO WRITE ASIAN WORDS FOR THEIR TATTOOS.



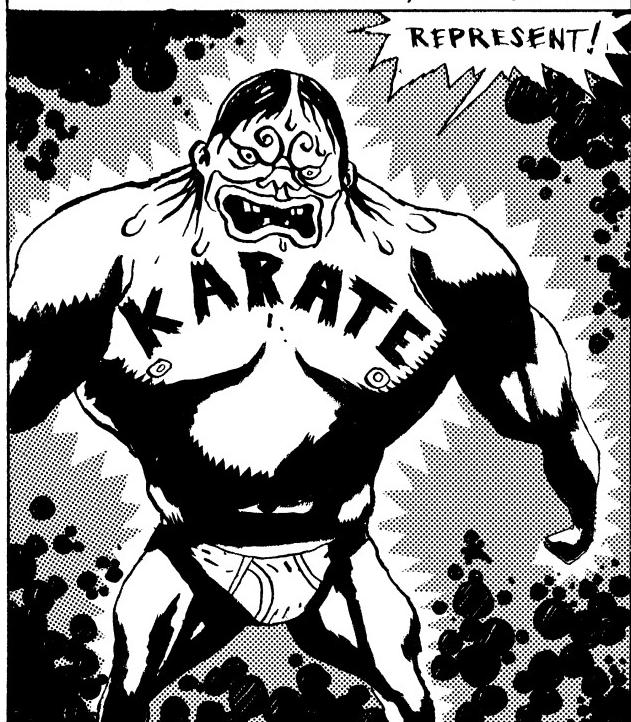
WHY ASK
ME?
(4TH GENERATION)



MAYBE THEY ARE AFRAID OF FOREVER BEARING A MARK OF STUPIDITY FOR THE REST OF THEIR LIVES?



MAYBE IF YOU DON'T ACTUALLY READ OR WRITE THE ASIAN LANGUAGE IN QUESTION YOU SHOULD JUST STICK TO WHAT YOU KNOW, LIKE ENGLISH.



私は実を言うと
アジア系の友達
に連絡してこれ
をもうついて
いる。

BUT I
AM ALSO
GUILTY OF
CALLING MY
ASIAN FRIENDS
TO TRANSLATE
STUFF FOR
ME.

AND I DON'T EVEN
HAVE ANY TATTOOS.

I DARE YOU TO GET THE ABOVE PANEL TATTOO'ED ACROSS YOUR BACK.

OOROOTORAHMAH SAYS: YOU CAN GET ANY KIND OF TATTOO YOU WANT I REALLY DONT CARE. JUST DO YOUR HOMEWORK.

完



"If the President snorts while he laughs, you have to take a shot of your favorite hard liquor."

Carelessly Drinking into Darkness

Last night was the State of the Union address. To start with, I am a registered Democrat. I used to be Republican when I was just out of high school, and, of course, I did not vote for the funny man in the White House. Besides the fact that I don't think that he's bright enough to be making the decisions for a country, especially my country, the real trouble with the President is his mannerisms. It's the way he leans to a side of the podium, the way he laughs, followed by what seems to be a snort, or the way his mouth curls down when he smiles. I thought a smile was supposed to curl up. Maybe it's the fact that he once owned the Texas Rangers, a baseball team that never really seemed to be a winning club that gets to me. Watching the State of the Union address gave me an idea.

My wife can't even watch the man, but I felt it would be wise to see what our leader had to say since his popularity is at an all-time low. I decided to make it a drinking game. It went something like this: if the President laughs, you have to drink a beer. If he snorts while he laughs, you have to take a shot of your favorite hard liquor. If he leans more than thirty degrees, you have to drink a beer. After a while the speech should get pretty interesting. Unfortunately, because it was a prepared speech, he didn't do much of the offensive mannerisms that he does when reporters are grilling him—and he gets defensive—so I found myself looking for anything to get a drink on. If he winks, drink. If he nods his head in a defiant manner, drink. I guess what I'm saying is that instead of flipping a quarter (President Washington) into a glass, that game can now be replaced by something predictable on television. How about Sunday's football game? Holding penalty—drink. Instant replay call—drink. Anytime they show a player's wife or mom, you know what to do. By halftime the lights will be out and you will find out who won Tuesday morning. The nice thing about all this drinking is that it is done in the comfort of your own living room. Imagine how much fun could be had with *American Idol*.

The funny thing was that we were supposed to go out, but with all the fun we were having, the time just slipped away. It has occurred to me lately that my life has become mundane. I leave early in the morning before the sun is up, work for eight hours, come

home, and if I sit down I can all but forget about accomplishing any thing else that day. Hopefully, all this thinking about drinking is my subconscious telling me that television is stealing my time. Yet so much information is right there in front of me.

I happen to be one of the few remaining households that do not have cable. We decided a very long time ago that if we got it we would never leave the house. I mean, look how bad it is with regular television. To just do a brief recap, the set can lure me into watching a man I don't like twist figures to his benefit while I carelessly drink myself into darkness. It's more fun drinking to some activity, such as, say, bowling or gambling, which are my side adventures, but I promised myself I could contain my euphoria. Thank God baseball season starts this week so I can get out of the house and drink responsibly and eat bratwurst at a ball game.

FORTUNE KOOKY

By Luster Kaboom
\$1.50 U.S.

I picked up this little nut job while I was in Vegas for punk rock bowling at a record store called Zia. It was sitting in a stack at the counter and it had this Crumb vibe to it. *Kooky* is right on. This little stamp book has some cool drawings and each panel has a Dr. Seuss hopped-up rhyme to go with it. For example: "The fairy was scary but the bug was smug. Who rules the garden? Not the beetles, not the ants, this dirt belongs to the plants."

The picture is of something that looks like a frog with horns. Pretty strange thinking going on in this one. Dali influenced this little comic, I think. This book is so small that it fits in the back pocket of your pants and can be whipped out at anytime when one wants to lose his/her marbles and giggle uncontrollably for a few moments. If you have that flight pattern, grab a copy, and hopefully you can get it from the web instead of hoofing it to Vegas. (lusterkaboom@hotmail.com)

SNOOZER

By Luster Kaboom
\$1.99 U.S.

I also found this in Vegas on that same counter in that same record store. *Snoozer*,

much like *Fortune Kooky*, is an elevator going the wrong way. It is a collection of short comics. Some make some sense, most make no sense, but for some unknown reason, I kept flipping pages. For the price of admission, it's worth contorting your face and scratching your head—a good romp on a boring day. (lusterkaboom@hotmail.com)

FAST TIMES

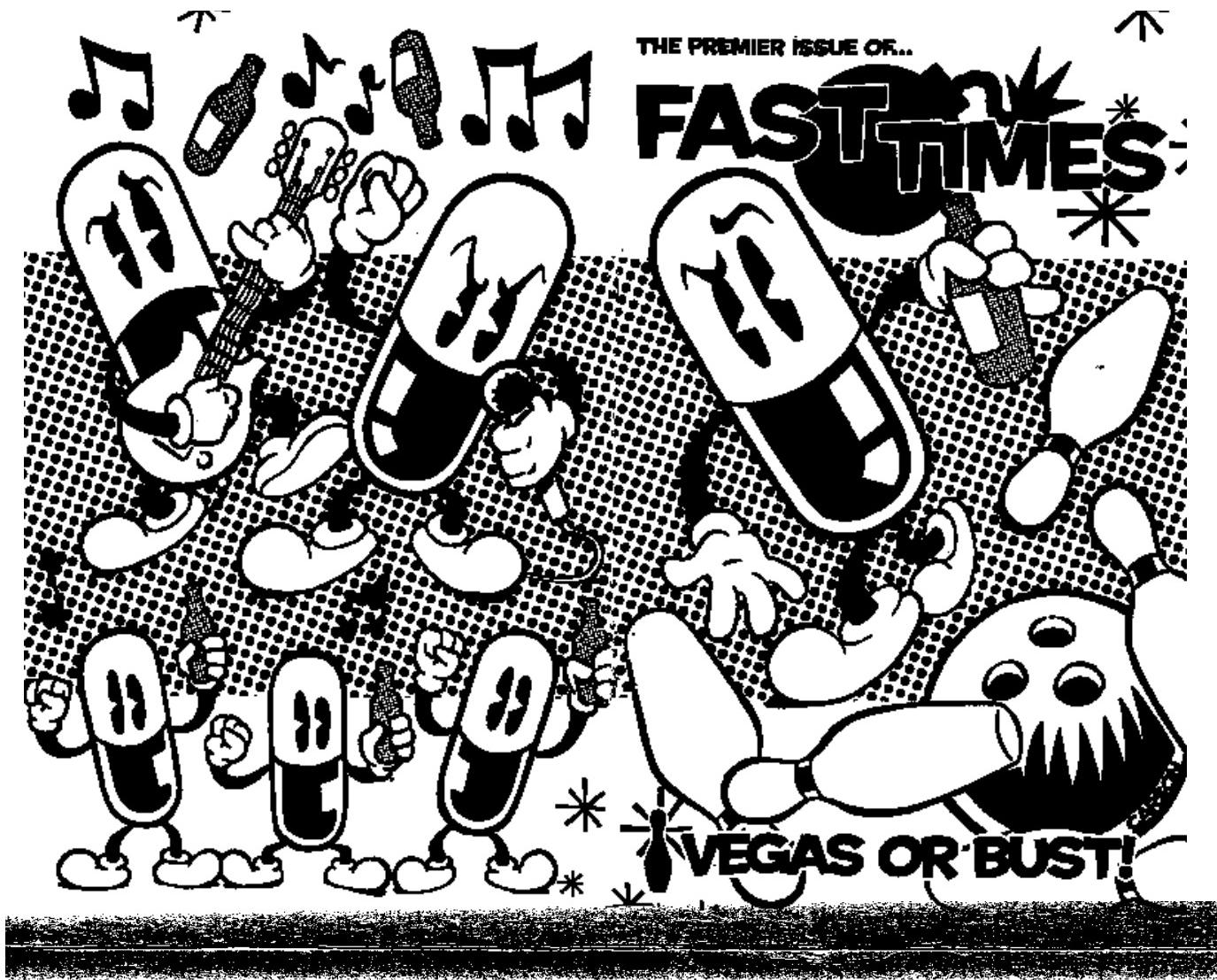
By Ken Swagger
\$3 U.S. from a guy with a trombone

This here is the primer issue, because it says so on the cover. It is also the Vegas issue, maybe because it was purchased in a bowling ally. This one is really more of a fanzine, but the cover looked like a comic so I'm going to give it a whirl. Most of this is dedicated to interesting personal short stories of things that happened in Vegas. I guess not everything that goes on in Vegas stays there. The hints to improving my bowling seem handy, especially the visuals, and who can forget the famous bowling pyramid? The comic by Chad Kamisky titled "Minus" is well drawn yet is so short the reader is left wanting more; more of the chick sunbathing on a roof and cracking open cold ones. Why is she doing that? To sum *Fast Times* up: a bowl-by-the-seat-of-your-pants good time. Can't wait for number two. (Fast Times, 2587 University Ave. #3, San Diego, CA 92104, fast-timeszine@gmail.com)

THE SURROGATES

By Venditti & Weldele
\$2.95 U.S.

The bad news is this is number three of a five-part series, so I'm starting smack in the middle of the story. The good news is this is well written and pretty damn exciting to read, especially for starting in the middle. The story is set in the future and has a religious/political conflict going on. The art is dark and somewhat of a watercolor washout, which adds to the mystery. Of course, the media plays a large role in the story line, much like the media of present day. From what I can make of the story, there is a rogue character causing trouble between the religious prophet and the police. The feeling is that when I get the rest of the series I'm going to be hog-riding



happy. Seems like a great title. (Top Shelf Productions, PO Box 1282, Marietta, GA 30061-1282, www.topshelfcomix.com)

SUPERF*CKERS

By James Kochalka
\$5.00 U.S.

*Superf*ckers* is *South Park* set in Mayberry. For superheroes, these guys suck. Half of the bunch come off as gay and the other half think they're tough guys, which, by the way they're drawn, is not going to happen. Two chicks: one in a shower scene that is limp and the other is just not anything. If swearing is a superhero trait, then these guys are super. The swearing doesn't make them tough or humorous. I find it hard to believe the cover that this is issue #273. Pass this title up. (Top Shelf Productions, PO Box 1282, Marietta, GA, 30061-1282)

TALES DESIGNED TO THRIZZLE #1

By Michael Kupperman
\$4.50 U.S.

Can you laugh uncontrollably at a comic? You can with this one! *Tales to Thrizzle* is awesome. It is divided into three sections: one for adults, one for kids, and one for seniors, but we all know it's for us. Let's take

the title word, "thrizzle," which is a combination of "thrill" and "dazzle," as we are told in the intro, and they don't disappoint. From the get-go, I was chuckling over Mickey Bourke's pubic hair stencils that he had been working on behind some filing cabinets in an office on Rodeo drive. After all, we haven't seen him in many movies lately. This comic is fabulous in bringing past novelty together with goofball humor. Take, for instance, the fabulous nut bra written by some guy whose enthusiasm causes him to curse, or Picasso's life as narrated by Mayor McCheese. I'm telling you to go out and scour the comic book stands for this one. Hell, it may even make the Taliban laugh. (Fantagraphics Books, Inc., 7563 Lake City Way NE, Seattle, WA 98115, www.fantagraphics.com)

LOVE AND ROCKETS #14

By Gilbert, Jaime, and Mario Hernandez
\$4.50 U.S./\$7.20 Canada

Who doesn't love Spanish soap operas? Here they have abnormally large breasted women. I always love reading this comic. It's something about Fritz. She's hot and she speaks with a lisp, which sometimes is so heavy that it takes several readings to make out what she's saying. The characters are always fighting at high society functions, but there

always seems to be some sexy reconciliation afterward. My favorite panel in this one, however, is the kid stuff page. It combines the problem of bringing handguns to school and little kids tattling to mom. Read it. You'll laugh. *Love and Rockets* is one of the best-drawn comics for a black and white; it has clean, defined lines and the covers are cool in color. It has the look of an artist that took his time. Lastly, and found on the last page, is a comics map of the U.S. that lists stores around the country. (www.fantagraphics.com)

THE COMICS JOURNAL

#269, \$9.95 U.S.

This is a major book for comic geeks, though it always seems high on Manga. If there is something new out there, more than likely, you'll find a blurb in this catalog of comics. The nice thing about this book is that it takes you backstage, it covers films, and it interviews authors and artists who give their perspectives on the craft. The best read in this is the article on the Stan Lee vs. Marvel settlement story, and how it has triggered all the comic character movies that will be coming out in the near future. Grab a copy if your interest is more than just reading comics. (www.fantagraphics.com)



Chrystaei Branchaw's Photo Page

the Nice Boys





A MONKEY TO RIDE THE DOG
SEAN CARSWELL

"Are you sure
you need one
more shot?"

FIVE YEARS OF FUCKIN' UP

Five years ago today, we shipped out the first issue of *Razorcake*. It was a long, tough process just to get to that point. In January of 2001, I took a few thousand dollars that I'd saved up from years of working construction, packed up my truck, and moved across the continent. My then-fiancée (now wife, Felizon) stayed behind in Florida. She said she'd give me a year to either get the mag up and running or come back home. Todd Taylor rented an apartment for the two of us in Los Angeles. Todd and I then spent two months doing everything it takes to start up a

magazine: setting up the computers and desks; gathering a slew of contributors and contributions; doing interviews; taking pictures; editing columns and interviews and reviews; laying out each page; soliciting advertising; wrangling distribution; and everything else that led up to dropping the originals off at the printer. When it was all said and done and we had two thousand copies of Issue #1 in our apartment, Sara Issett came over and the three of us stuffed subscription cards into each zine. That issue had a newsprint cover. By the end of the evening,

we were all covered in printer's ink. It was pretty fucking exciting.

Since we actually started the zine in January of 2001, last issue was the five-year anniversary. It's come and gone with almost no fanfare. I didn't even mention it in my last column because I've been writing a series of stories about being a young carpenter. If you're keeping track, those stories will come back next issue. In the meantime, I'm gonna celebrate five years of *Razorcake* right now by giving you my all-time, top five favorite interviews.

#5 SELBY TIGERS, NOVEMBER, 1999

Before *Razorcake*, I wrote for a free monthly in Florida called *Ink 19*. I'd been in the *Ink 19* offices one day, chatting about new bands with an editor named Julio. I told him about the Selby Tigers, who had just released *Charm City*. I couldn't get enough of the album, and I went on and on, telling Julio about the Selbys' quirky punk rock, the Undertones influences and X with a sense of humor and everything else I loved about the band. Three days later, I got a call from Darren, a publicist at Hopeless Records (the label that released *Charm City*). Darren said, "Julio told me you were interested in interviewing the Selby Tigers when they come through town next week." I hadn't told Julio that, but I figured, if he wanted an interview, I'd do it. So I agreed. As it turned out, Julio had never said that. Darren was pulling the old trick of telling a writer that the editor wants an interview, and then telling the editor that the writer wants to cover a band. Darren's a stockbroker now. I'm not surprised.

Anyway, on the day of the show, I called the venue in Orlando to make sure I was on the list. I found out that it didn't matter because show had been cancelled. It was a bummer. A few hours later, I got a call from Darren. He said, "The Selbys are stranded. They're in a little town about an hour east of Orlando called Cocoa Beach. Any chance you'll go there and interview them?"

Seeing as how I lived in Cocoa Beach, the chances were good. I got their contact information, called them, and found out that they were stranded about two blocks away from where I lived. Their bass player had had to leave the tour to deal with a family emergency. The rest of the band was hanging out down the road from me. Not only did I



The Weird Lovemakers • #2

photo by Todd Taylor

interview them, but I spent the next few days hanging out with them. It was Thanksgiving weekend, so I had all kinds of time off. We went to a block party in downtown Cocoa Beach and drank a few gallons of cheap keg beer. We went bowling and the drummer spent an hour trying to convince me that Chic's "Le Freak" was a really great song. Felizon made us a ton of Mexican food and we had a second Thanksgiving feast. By the end of the weekend, I felt like Arzu, Nate, and Dave from the Selbys were old friends. The only problem was, I did the interview at the beginning of the weekend, before I knew much about them. On the evening before they left, Felizon finally put two and two together and realized that the people we were hanging out with were the same people who played the music that she and I had been listening to non-stop for the past month. We sat around our apartment and Felizon asked them all the questions about their band that I should've asked. They had great stories. Too bad I never recorded those stories and typed them up. If I had, they'd be higher than five on my top-five list. And *Charm City*, by the way, is still one of the all-time great albums.

#4 BROKEN BOTTLES, APRIL, 2003

When Hostage Records released its amazing *Cuts* compilation in 2002, it blew me away. One song from that comp that I couldn't get out of my head was "Gothic Chicks" by the Broken Bottles. It was so simple, so pure that it maybe could've been mistaken for being derivative. No way. That song isn't just what punk rock should be about. It's what music should be about. It's all raw energy and melody.

They followed that song up with a couple of seven inches and an EP that only served to solidify my fandom. I couldn't get enough of this band. To top it off, the story behind them was intriguing as hell. Apparently, the singer/songwriter, Jess, had been institutionalized in a mental hospital. During his stay there, his brother Travis brought him a guitar. Every week, Jess would write a song, and, when Travis came to visit, Jess would teach the song to him. Upon Jess's release, they put together the band. When I heard that story, that was it. I had to meet them.

Todd and I drove down to the furthest reaches of southern Orange County to the Homer Price subdivisions flanked by nuclear power plants. We found the Broken Bottles there. We went to their practice space, which was just an empty room in a suburban house. The rest of the house looked very typical, very middle class, but the practice room was bare except for the instruments, the band playing them, the wall of music exploding out, and the body odor steaming up and sticking to the walls. The guys played a couple of songs while Todd and I waited. Then, we sat out on the thick grass of the front lawn and did the interview. I expected to hear tales of punk rock madness from Jess and the rest of the band, and they gave us those stories. What I didn't expect, though, was what I learned from Travis, the bassist. He didn't say much, but he had this way about him, like he was the father of the band, or the mentor of the

band, or something. The other guys always deferred to him when they needed to say something wise, looked to him for advice, told stories about him. It was clear that this tattooed, thirty-something year old warehouse worker was not only the glue that held this band together. He was also the guy who'd taken three lost, angry young men and gave them hope to escape the dead ends of the suburban madhouse they'd been born into.

#3 PEGBOY, MARCH, 1998

This was in the old *Flipside* days. I was living in Atlanta and Todd was working as the editor of *Flipside*. He wanted a Pegboy interview, but they weren't going through Los Angeles on their tour. They were going through Atlanta, though, so he called me and asked me to do the interview. Of course I would. It was Pegboy.

Normally, before doing an interview with a band, I do all kinds of research on the band, I talk to mutual friends or acquaintances to get an inside scoop, I write up a list of questions, and I show up completely prepared. This was not the case with Pegboy. I walked into that interview with no better plan than to say something like, "Uh, I really like you guys. Naked Raygun ruled, too."

Pegboy was playing an afternoon show at a cool, now-extinct Atlanta venue called The Point. Next door to The Point was the cool, now-extinct neighborhood bar, Little Five Points Pub. My old friend Laura Molnar was tending bar at the Pub that afternoon. I met Larry and Pierre from Pegboy at The Point, dragged them over to the Pub, sat them down, and hoped something good would come out of my incompetence. Something good did come out of it: Molnar. She poured four shots (one for each of us) and warmed us all up. Since Larry was a bartender, too, we all got to telling bartending stories, drinking beers, having fun. In the midst of it, Larry said, "I gotta tell you about what happened last night."

"Wait," I said. I fished the tape recorder out of my pocket, turned it on, and said, "Okay. Go ahead."

Larry told a story about dropping his pants in the middle of a steak house in South Carolina. From there, we talked about punk rock, the band, the Naked Raygun reunion show, and so on. Molnar kept us full of beer and shots the whole time. We drank and talked so much that I started to get worried that they'd be too drunk to play. I actually pulled the old, hypocritical, "Are you sure you need one more shot?" Because, after all, I wanted to see the show. Larry and Pierre didn't need the shot, but they took it anyway.

Somehow, I pulled an interview out of that drunken mess and Pierre and Larry pulled off an amazing show.

#2 THE WEIRD LOVEMAKERS, JANUARY, 2001

I'd gone all the way to Tucson, Arizona to interview these guys. Five minutes into the interview, Greg, the singer, said to me, "You know we broke up, don't you?" No, Greg, I did not know that. If I'd known that, I would've stayed in L.A.

Still, I persisted with the interview because a.) I'd done all the research and wrote up all the questions and b.) I felt like I was the world's only Weird Lovemakers fan and I had to spread the word, break-up be damned. So I powered through the interview. I learned a bit about the porn business and pirate radio and tripping on acid with John Brannon. The weirdest thing about talking with these guys was that they were my age and they seemed to have grown up on and loved the exact same albums, comic books, movies, and books that I grew up on and loved. I stuck around with them for a few hours after the interview was over and bullshitted. I know it's not much of a story, but, when you consider what oddball tastes I have in music, comics, movies, and books, it is a remarkable occurrence. And I found out that I'm not the world's only Weird Lovemakers fan. Mike Plante at *Cinemad* magazine suffers from the same affliction.

#1 HOWARD ZINN, OCTOBER, 2001

This guy is my hero. I remember reading his book, *A People's History of the United States*, when I was still a construction worker. It gave me hope. It made me feel like I could do something meaningful with my life, just like so many blue collar people like me had in the past. That book may have been the kick in the ass that I needed to get out of the construction industry.

Fast forward a few years. Todd and I had released three or four issues of *Razorcake* and we sat around talking about who we'd interview if we could interview anyone in the world. Howard Zinn's name came up. Todd said, "I bet we could make that happen." He got Zinn's contact information through a friend, and we contacted him. Howard said, "Sure, come on by." The only problem was that he lived in Boston and we lived in L.A. As luck had it, though, we both had to be in Boston that October, anyway, so we set up a day and time.

I spent a ridiculous amount of time getting ready for the interview. I reread several of his books. I read every interview I could find with him. I had a list of questions so long that I would've had to do a book-length interview with him to get through them all. I was more than ready.

Howard turned out to be a great guy. He was very friendly and accommodating. He put up with more than an hour's worth of questions from me and Todd. I got the sense that he would've put up with more, but he had to do a talk at the library that afternoon. As we were wrapping up the interview, Howard reached into his briefcase and pulled out a book. The spine was wrinkled, the covers curled, the pages spread out. This book had been read. I looked more closely. It was *Drinks for the Little Guy*. Howard said to me, "You wrote this book?"

I nodded, a little stunned.

Howard said, "I like it. It's funny."

And that was it for me. Everything up to that point was worth it.

-Sean Carswell

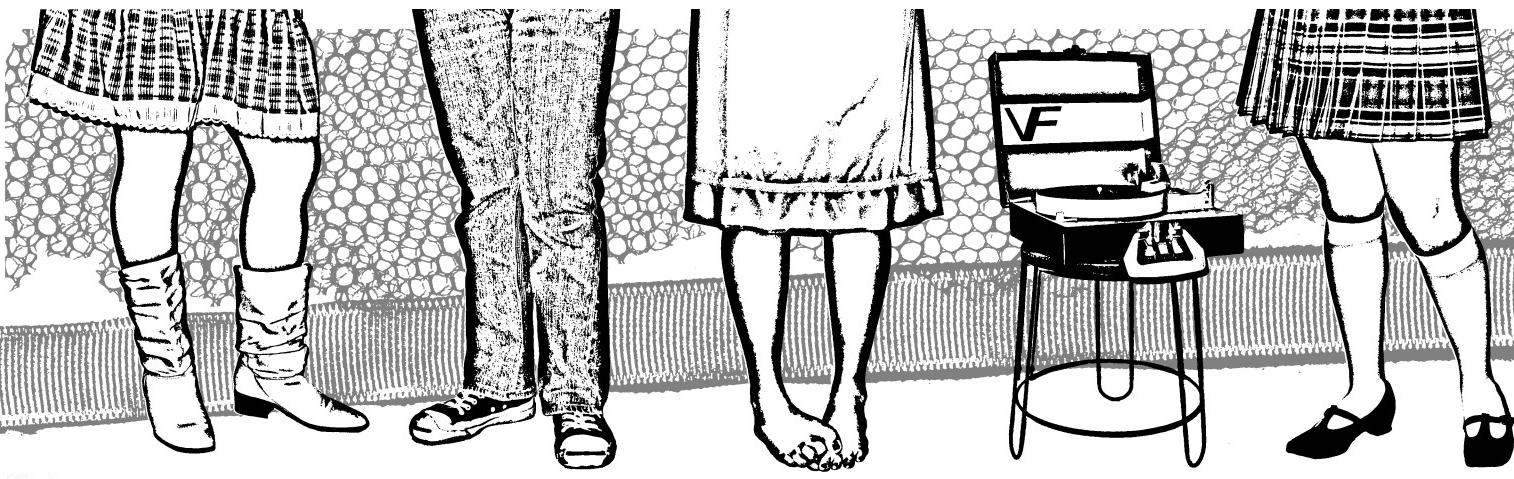


Dan Monick's Photo Page





Jenny Angellilo's Photo Page



Typical Girls

by Jennifer Whiteford

art junk by Amy Adouzie

Almost summer. Toronto suburbs. 1988.

But really, what started it all was that we heard "London Calling" on the radio directly after "Dude Looks Like a Lady."

Everything had been normal up until that point. My best friend, Krista Bailhurst (or "Nail-first" if you were one of the dumb guys in my grade) was driving her mom's Volkswagen Rabbit and I was sitting, as usual, in the passenger seat with my arm out the window. I was studying my hair in the side-view mirror when Aerosmith came on and Krista turned it up. I had been evaluating my hairdo, thinking that it may have looked great when I left the house after dinner that night, but two hours of having it blown around in the wind while we drove around had flattened it out and made it look lame. Krista's hair never looked like that. Hers was curly to start with, and she always used a ton of hairspray in it. It almost looked like Barbie hair. Krista was not afraid of hairspray, or much else, for that matter.

When "Dude Looks Like a Lady" came on and Krista turned it up, I looked away from the side-view mirror and smiled at her. She smiled back and pumped her left fist in the air and out her window. We instantaneously started singing together.

Krista never needed to look at herself in the car mirror unless it was to fix her lipstick after giving some guy a blowjob or to fix her runny mascara after she barfed for having too many rye and cokes at a party. She never stared at the mirror worrying the way I did—she didn't have to. Sure, Krista was hot, but she was also smart. Smart enough to know that how you looked didn't really matter. Besides, Krista had lots of other things to think about.

We sang the whole song, word for word, and we even did the same hip-thrusting dance in our seats during the "whatta funky lay-dee" part. This was the way I liked to spend my nights. I didn't even care if we met up with boys. It was always enough if it was just Krista, me, and the radio.

My scar goes from my left ear to the corner of my mouth.

When I was fifteen and I'd only had the scar for about two years, I used to refer to it as mybighugescar. As in, "Dena and I are identical twins and the only way you can tell us apart is mybighugescar!"

My older stepbrother, Keith, is the reason why I have the scar. Keith gave me the scar on purpose because I was being "mouthy." I can't even remember exactly what I said, but the main point of it was that Keith had a small dick.

I'd never even seen Keith's dick before, so it wasn't like I said it because I knew it was true or anything. It was just one of those things you say, the kind of thing I might say to some jerk who pushed my books out of my hands in the hallway at school, or to one of the guys at the arcade that liked to yell about Krista being easy.

I now think that Keith must actually have a small dick, because, otherwise, I don't think he would have been upset enough to come after me with a knife. He is two years older than I and totally enormous, like a big football player. He grabbed my arm and brought the knife up to my face and growled at me. "Take it back!" Of course I wouldn't. Would you have thought that your own stepbrother would really cut you in the face? I sure didn't.

After he did it, I was kind of in shock. The cut was really deep and blood went everywhere. It didn't hurt as much as I would have thought, but it stung like a bitch and I got really freaked out from all the blood. I didn't cry, though. I just looked at Keith with my meanest face ever. Dena screamed and when Mom came upstairs and saw the blood, she went totally ballistic. She put a big green towel on my face and made Dena hold it there while she ran to get my stepfather, Don.

"Don, get up here and take a look at what your lunatic son did to my girl!"

Keith was still holding the knife, which had some blood on it. There was blood on his U2 Unforgettable Fire concert T-shirt, too. I was glad about that, because I always fucking hated U2.

Don came upstairs and even though he is about half the size of Keith, he looked mad enough that Keith put the knife down on my



“The Clash, Krista mouthed the words. It looked like she was tasting them, like they were made of hard candy, rolling around behind her teeth.”

dresser and looked at the ground. He reminded me of a puppy who'd pissed on the rug, just waiting to get clobbered by a rolled-up newspaper.

I went to the hospital and Keith got sent to stay with his mother until he could be shipped away to a school for unmanageable teenage boys. I didn't really miss him. The last thing I wanted to do was run around worrying that someone I lived with was going to slash me in the face.

As if I didn't have enough to worry about already.

When “Dude Looks Like a Lady” was all done, the radio DJ started playing The Clash. Krista leaned forward like she was going to turn down the volume, but then she didn't. She just rested her hand on the cigarette lighter and turned to look at me. “What band is this again?”

“London Calling” rattled out of the tinny, dashboard speakers as our car jerked to a stop at the intersection.

“It's The Clash,” I told her. Krista could never remember who sang what or what album a certain song was on, but I was pretty good at knowing that stuff.

The Clash, Krista mouthed the words. It looked like she was tasting them, like they were made of hard candy, rolling around behind her teeth.

The light turned green and Krista jammed her foot down on the gas pedal. We lurched forward. The sun had disappeared beyond the horizon.

Krista didn't say anything until the song was over. When an announcer came on, talking about the price of dishwashers at Mike Murley's Used Appliance Emporium, Krista turned to me. “Poor Boy's?” she asked. I nodded.

Poor Boy's Arcade was where all the headbangers hung out. Most of the headbangers were boys and what they liked to do while inside the arcade was play the racing games where you sit down in front of the screen and it's like you're really driving a car around a track. What they liked to do outside of the arcade was smoke joints and take pulls off of the flasks that some of them kept in their jean jacket pockets. They also liked to go to their cars and get blowjobs off of girls like me and Krista.

When we got to Poor Boy's, I could see a bunch of boys gathered around the entrance with a cloud of smoke around them. I looked into the side-view mirror again before we got out of the car. I tried to fix my hair so that it would cover as much of my scar as possible. Even with make up, you could still see its outline snaking down my face like a road with a sharp right hand turn. The boys by the arcade door turned to watch us as we got out of the car.

“Hey! Krista!” one of them called out, “You wanna take a little walk with me?”

I looked over at Krista, praying she would say no. I didn't want her to leave me alone with all these guys, at least not yet. I didn't want to have to go inside and pretend to be interested in getting the high score on Ms. Pac Man just so they'd leave me alone.

“No thanks, Latimer.” Krista snapped her gum and narrowed her eyes into little slits. “I'll pass.” She flipped her perfect hair over one shoulder and pulled me past the guys into the darkness of the arcade. As usual, it smelled like french fries and vomit. I was relieved to be inside.

“I thought you liked him,” I said, as Krista lit a cigarette and then shook out the match.

“Rory Latimer? No way.” Rory was kind of the king of the metalheads. He was less goofy than a lot of them, kind of sexy in a scary way, with a big mane of hair, lots of acne, and very tight black jeans. Whenever my twin sister Dena saw him, she said his jeans were probably lowering his sperm count. Dena can be a bit of a bitch sometimes. And she totally hates heavy metal.

Krista took a long drag off her cigarette and looked around, like she was checking to see if anybody could hear us.

“I think we need to stop being metalheads,” she said. I squinted through the cloud of smoke she'd exhaled.

Krista and I had been metalheads since grade nine. We teased our hair up big, we wore tight jeans and short skirts. We hung out with metal boys and went to see Mötley Crüe at the Palladium in the summer. If we weren't going to be metalheads, what were we going to be?

“I just think,” Krista said, with another deep puff on her cigarette, “That if we were punks, we'd have to put up with a lot less sexist bullshit.”

I gave her a look like, “what are you talking about?” and scowled at Rory who'd stuck his head in the door and was staring at Krista's boobs. Rory stuck his tongue out at me and wagged it around. Then he disappeared behind the closing door.

The truth was, even though people at school thought she was dumb and slutty, Krista was always coming up with smart ideas. Like when the United States started bombing in Iraq, she totally knew all the reasons why that was wrong. I knew it was wrong too, but Krista, she knew all the reasons exactly, and she could name the people who were in charge and tell you all about the history of the whole thing. Not that anyone ever asked her. I'm pretty sure I was the only one who knew how smart she was. But that didn't help me understand why she was suddenly wanting us not to be metalheads anymore.

“Punk girls don't run around giving blowjobs to guys. Punk girls are cooler. It really is the more feminist option. And we'd still get to lis-

ten to good music." Krista could talk like that, like she was writing some kind of fucking term paper, and all the while she'd be smoking like a fiend and scowling at the other people in the arcade who might dare to look over at us. I totally didn't know what to say.

"Let's get out of here," she said, grinding her cigarette butt into the dirty floor with the toe of her sneaker.

"Now?" I asked, looking around. "But we haven't even talked to any boys yet."

Krista turned her slit eyes around on me. "Haven't you been listening to me?" she asked. "This place is all wrong for us."

As much as I liked the thought of never having to give a blow job to another low-sperm-count, sweaty-balled metalhead again, Krista's plan of action seemed a little extreme.

Rory Latimer thought so too.

"Hey, Nail First! Where're you goin'?"

Krista didn't even turn around. She just stalked past him and started rummaging around in her white leather purse for her car keys. I walked around the car and stood with my hand on the passenger side door handle. I watched Rory run to his Corvette and hop into the driver's side. He gunned the engine and pulled it up just behind Krista's mom's Rabbit.

"Where are you goin'?" he asked again, his head sticking out the window.

"None of your goddamn business," Krista told him. She was still pawing around inside her purse, looking for her keys. That was the only reason I knew she was kind of nervous.

"Why don't you come back inside and you and I can have a good time together?" Rory asked, grinning out the window.

"I'd rather eat shit."

Krista turned away from our car just as Rory hit the gas and pulled his car up beside us. I watched her turn around with a look of pure hatred on her face. Then I watched Rory drive over her foot.

"What the FUCK?" Krista screamed. All of a sudden, she was standing on one leg, holding her busted left foot in her right hand. "MOTHER! FUCKER!"

Rory peeled out of the parking lot so fast, but I don't think he knew what he'd just done. I somehow managed to get Krista, who was still screaming and swearing, into the back seat of the car. She stretched out her leg and moaned a bit, staring at her mangled foot in its puffy, white Reebok sneaker.

"Aw fuck, look at my foot!" she said. "I am never going to suck that guy's dick again."

I laughed. And then I drove her to the hospital.

* * *

Krista's broken foot gave her the week away from school she needed to begin the Great Banger to Punk Image Transformation. I went to see her every day after school. At first I brought her homework, but after two days I realized she wasn't going to do it anyway, so I stopped. Krista was doing a whole different kind of homework. She was mostly listening to records that her older brother, Martin, left behind when he'd gone away to college.

"I think my favorite is this one," she said, holding up the sleeve for *London Calling*. "But this is good too, and so is this, and this..." She tossed the record covers at me like they were Frisbees. The Sex Pistols, the Ramones, The New York Dolls, Gang of Four.

"You know James, with the sideburns?" I asked her. She thought for a minute and nodded. "He likes those bands."

James was an old, old friend of mine from our neighborhood. We played truth or dare together when we were in grade seven. Now we hardly talked, except sometimes when my parents invited his parents over and we were forced to socialize. I knew about the bands he liked because I paid attention to the T-shirts he wore to school.

Krista thought about that for a minute.

"The thing about these songs," she said, "is that none of them are really about pussy, you know?" I shrugged and laughed a bit. "No, really!" She took the cap off a Sharpie and started drawing a heart on her cast. "These songs are about war and politics and, you know, social issues." I watched her pen a large dagger sticking into the heart. "It's way better than metal. Like, I listen to these songs and I think, I could like this song forever. It's not like Def Leppard where I'm lucky if I like a song for more than two months."

I took the Sharpie out of her hands and started drawing the outline of an electric guitar. Krista sat back and admired my work.

"You should call that guy James. We can talk to him about music."

"Maybe." I shrugged again. I knew that Krista would force me to call him before the end of the afternoon. I wondered what I would say.

* * *

The next week Krista was back at school. The changes in her weren't that huge, but I noticed, and so did other people in our grade. First, her hair was flatter; she was looking a little bit like Joan Jett. Her thick eyeliner was the same, but her clothes were different. No more high heels and jeans. Now she had big lace-up boots (she only wore one since her other foot was still in the cast), ripped-up fishnet stockings, and a kilt that was so short, if she dropped something she had to ask me to bend over and get it for her.

People were a little bit confused, but Krista still looked hot, so no one really got uptight about her new look. Plus, with those new boots, she looked even more like she could kick anyone's ass who messed with her. And no one was surprised that she stopped hanging out with Rory Latimer and his arcade posse because everyone in the whole school knew that he'd run over her foot.

It was just like Krista to have breaking her foot make everything else in her life run so much smoother.

At lunchtime we went out back and ate with James and some of his friends who were the punkiest people we could find at our school. They were all boys and kind of geeky. They looked at Krista like she'd broken her foot while falling from heaven. Most of them didn't seem to know what to say to her. Luckily, Krista never had problems talking. While she entertained the nerdy punk boys, James and I sat beside each other, eating sandwiches, and talking about his record collection.

Listening to a boy talk about records like that would have been boring as hell if the boy was anyone other than James. But James did this thing where he would tell me about music that he actually thought I would like and then he'd tell me where I could go and get that particu-

"All that was in my head
were the drums, voices, and
guitars. They were filling up
my mind and pulling me
towards something new."

lar record. He wasn't just talking. He was actually making sure he was talking about something I'd be interested in. I'd never had a conversation like that with a high school boy before, and I started to have a crush on James almost immediately. I even liked his sideburns and I didn't care that I'd known him forever. He was cute and nice and he had the best records of anyone I'd ever met. And Krista wasn't interested in him, which meant I actually had a chance.

I thought James kind of liked me too, because when we all sat outside he would always come and sit down right next to me. Krista thought he liked me too, and she'd tease me about it while we drove around at night.

"Has James asked you out yet?"

"No."

"Has he kissed you yet?"

"NO!"

"Are you dreaming about the two of you having little punk rock babies together?"

"Shut the fuck up, Krista."

The truth was, I had been dreaming about James, but not about babies. I had been using up the boring time during my classes dreaming about his record collection and about how maybe I could have sex with him in his room while his parents were out. And then afterwards I could lie there with my head on his chest and he could play me a whole bunch of his favorite albums and we'd stay in his bed, naked, talking about music. That was what I'd been dreaming about, but there was no way I would ever tell Krista because she'd laugh her fucking ass off.

The weird thing was, James was one of the only people at school who had seen me before I got my scar. For some reason that made me feel more confident around him, like even if he didn't think I was pretty now, at least he had some memories of how I had been pretty before I got the big scar. I didn't tell Krista that, either.

What I did tell her was James came to my house one night when I was getting ready for bed. He asked if we could hang out on my porch for a while. I answered the door in my Winnie the Pooh pajamas, which made me feel like a huge loser, but since he'd already seen me, I couldn't run inside and put on normal clothes. So I told him I would get us glasses of water. I ran to the kitchen and checked my reflection in the microwave. When I came outside I saw he was holding a bag from Soundman Records. He handed it to me.

"I... uh... got you this."

It was a Slits album—one he'd told me sounded great. I hadn't had a chance to buy it for myself yet. I didn't know what to say. I felt like he'd just given me an engagement ring. Eventually I said thanks, but I was still shocked so it came out kind of breathy and dorky-sounding. But James kissed me anyway and I put my hands on the sides of his

face and touched his sideburns like I'd been wanting to do for weeks. We kissed until I heard Dena coming down the stairs, calling my name.

When you have a boy's tongue in your mouth—a cute boy, all skinny, with a wallet chain and great taste in music—the last sound you ever want to hear is your twin sister's voice.

"Allison?" she called, and James and I froze mid-kiss. "Allison? Where the fuck did you go? You're in your goddamn pajamas!"

I backed away from James and took my hands off his sideburns. I couldn't really look at his face, partly because I was embarrassed, but mostly because I knew I'd just start kissing him again.

"I'd better go in," I said, rubbing at a minuscule spot on the concrete steps with my thumb.

"Yeah," he said. He couldn't look at me either. He just shifted around a bit and let out this long breath. "You'd better."

"I'll, uh, see you tomorrow," I stood up, holding the record to my chest, "at school."

James looked up at me, finally, and smiled. "Yeah, at school." He pushed himself up off the steps and walked down the driveway in the direction of his own house.

"Allison!" It was Dena again.

"I'm coming in!" I yelled back. I stood outside for a minute longer, hoping that when I went in she wouldn't be there waiting to bug me with questions. When I opened the door she had disappeared.

Up in my room I held my new album in my hands and stared at it. I slit the shrink wrap with my finger nail and peeled it away slowly. I turned the record over in my hands, reading all the song titles and studying the band photos, then slid the album, perfect, heavy, and black, out of the sleeve and put it down on my turntable.

I'd already sold all my metal records so that I could start a new collection. Now all I had was five records sitting in a crate on my floor. But I liked to think about the day the crate would be full and then I'd get another crate and fill that one up, too. I put the sleeve into the crate. Number six.

I let the stylus drop onto the vinyl and I got into bed with my headphones on. I turned off the lights and closed my eyes.

When the music started, it was like I forgot I only had a few records. I forgot about school, and my family, and even Krista. I didn't think about the record being a present from James. All that was in my head were the drums, voices, and guitars. They were filling up my mind and pulling me towards something new. Like I could live inside the music. Somewhere better. Somewhere else.



THE CAN KICKERS



Interview by BD Williams
Photos by Amy Adoyzie & Todd Taylor
Art Junk by Amy Adoyzie

When I first heard of the Can Kickers I wasn't sure the stories were true. A band who's playing house shows packed full of people dancing to the sounds of a banjo and fiddle, with a punk-washboard-dance beat banging out in the back field was not a far fetched idea. But, in my meager travels, I hadn't seen or heard of anyone holding it down to that degree. I mean, other people were playing similar styles, but there was something more with the Can Kickers. There was the feeling of some raw, primitive—or if not quite primitive—a cast-aside power, which was being refined and held together with a new vision. It was years before I would see the Can Kickers wind up the crowd before letting them loose at a house show in San Pedro, California and that was a day before I saw them play four shows in one day in L.A. That's a feat. For those of you who may be doubters, try booking a show, and then when you can't get one, you still play four different spots: one in front of Amoeba Music in Hollywood, another on the boulevard next to ravenous tourists and three different dudes dressed up as Spiderman, then again in the deep green grass of Bedpan Park, only to end it that night by playing an all-ages spot. And none of those shows, except the one at Bedpan Park, were planned out more than a day in advance. It's that kind of action that puts the Can Kickers on a different level than most bands. But it's not just that. Bring your guitar, gutbucket, banjo, fiddle, or any other stings you might want to bang around on out to the show and you might find yourself on the streets, in the alley, or in the grass playing some songs you never thought you knew.

Daniel Curtis Thompson—fiddle, the mouth-harp, and the jaw-harp: which is a form of mouth harp: or called a juice-harp

Doug—Washboard, drums, and occasional yelp

Daniel Manoogian Spurr—banjo, guitar, and vocals

BD: (The Can Kickers have just finished their third show of the evening in Los Angeles and we're heading down the street to the fourth show. Soon after the fourth show, we're drinking spoiled champagne in the street. There's no pressure inside the bottle so the cork doesn't want to budge. The champagne is finally opened and it pours out slow and brown like some thinned-out molasses.) How's the champagne?

Danny: Flat, but sweet like maple syrup. It might be good on pancakes.

Doug: Ten minutes into our L.A. trip and Chris' (aka Candle, aka CLC) landlord is at the gate like, "What's the password?" Two minutes

after that, she came to his door and asked, "You dirty boys drink, right?" And we're like, "Yeah, we drink."

And we went into the room next door. This old dude was moving to Mississippi, and he hands us two cases full of gin, a bottle of Thunderbird with a sticker from a biker rally on the back that said "1978 Warlocks are go! Compliments of Bitch," and a bottle of champagne that'd turned

into some kind of syrup. You know, welcome to L.A. Last night, I was sleeping next to Dan T. and in his sleep, he rolls around and says "Awesome" a lot. I'm not kidding. It's like four in the morning, and I can't sleep very well so I'm usually up and I'm sitting there thinking... anyway, I turn over, and Dan T. is shirtless, and he goes, "That's awesome, aaaahhhhhh," like that, and he unzips his sleeping bag a little, and dude... the stench from that bag, and I'm like, "Jesus Christ, that's disgusting," and I almost puked. Dude, stack of bibles—swear on it.

BD: How would you describe the Can Kickers?

Dan T.: It's not unlike the sound of a train falling fifty feet through the air into a swimming pool of wet cement, and it's not unlike the sound of a champagne cork that doesn't pop.

Danny: [to Dan T.] But what is it like?

Dan T.: We play old music, but we try to do-it-up for the kids, make it exciting.

Danny: Jim said it was folk music in overdrive.

Dan T.: I guess that's one way to look at it.

Doug: Punked-out mountain music.

BD: In the decades of rock bands using amps and the days of bands making a mad rush to arena rock with some new sound, why do you play the music that you play: acoustic?

Danny: It is the new sound. It's so old it's new.

BD: Is it alternative country?

All: No, no.

Doug: That's old, man.

Danny: You see, alt-country is older than this music, if you think about it.

Dan T.: It depends on who you talk to. Someone explained all that to me once, but I don't understand it. I think it's our calling. We were called and we had to answer that call. Maybe I'm speaking for myself...

Danny: No, you got it.

Dan T.: It gives you a purpose. It keeps you going, makes you wake up in the morning, and you know who you are and what you want to do with yourself.

Danny: It's old music, but if you listen to old recordings they're much more exciting than most of the music you hear on the radio.

BD: How do you feel playing the style of music you do in an area that's more accustomed to punk and rock'n'roll?

Doug: It is really funny. When we first started touring about three or four years ago, we played with all punk bands, and now it's like that every show on this tour so far—pretty much—there's been one old-time band each night or something similar.

Dan T.: It's like the Ice Age, and old time music might be like the Ice Age or dinosaurs...

BD: There was a movie that came out several years ago, *O' Brother Where Art Thou*. Did that inspire you?

Danny: That movie had a big impact on society, I think, and the awareness of this kind of music, but we started before that movie came out. I think that this music is everywhere. It's starting to permeate up, and pop up in different areas concurrently. Spontaneous generation.

BD: What started the idea behind the Can Kickers?

Doug: I played in a punk band before. We got reviewed in *Slug and Lettuce* and they said we were generic punky-punk. With the Can Kickers, what happened was that one night these guys were playing in a mutual friend's apartment. I was listening to it and thinking it was really cool. I had never heard it before, and I was playing along on a little bucket. I had heard of this band called the Dickel Brothers on WCNI, in

New London, which is where we all did radio shows...

Dan T.: WCNI 90.9

Doug: It was 91.1 at that time 'cause we were old school, back in the day, where ever that is. But I wrote to the Dickel Brothers and asked them how they got that snare drum sound and Michael their washboard player writes me back and is like, "Hey, that's a washboard. Get some thimbles and scrape a washboard." And the funny shit is that now Michael's toured with us and we just played with the Dickel Brothers in Portland, so it's like full circle. I still have the email in my account. I saved it. he was super nice and was like, "Hey Doug, this is Michael from the Dickel Brothers. This is a washboard. This is how you play it. I can get your band some shows if you come out here. Send me a CD." I thought that was the nicest thing for someone to do.

Danny: It was kind of funny when the Can Kickers started. I had been playing banjo for a little while. I had moved back up to the Boston area and was playing in the Boston old-time scene with a lot of seventies revivalist types, but it wasn't as exciting as the old recordings I had been listening to. It just didn't have the energy that the old recordings had. It was more of people sitting around, playing old tunes. It was fun, but I really wanted to do something different. We were just sitting around playing and Doug started on drums. It was pretty fun, then it developed into something, and I realized that this was what I had been wanting to do. It wasn't like we set out to be some new-sounding old-time band.

Doug: I think the thing behind the Can Kickers is that we've never set out to do anything and everything has sort of fallen into place for us, which is really cool.

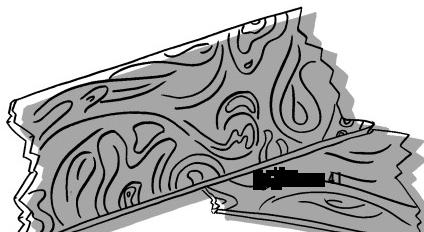
BD: How did you get started playing, Danny? I mean, your sound is sort of...

Danny: Old.

BD: Yeah, old like some 'ol crinkled-up man from the mountains who eats opossum tails for breakfast. How did you get that sound being from Connecticut? Everyone thinks of the south as being the bastion of the country sound.

Danny: I'd been exposed to folk music when I was little, like Pete Seeger...

Doug: For the record, my parents were into Simon and Garfunkel.





Danny: I liked old New England fiddle music, contra dance.

BD: Danny, can you tell us a little about the style of banjo picking you play?

Danny: A lot of people call it “claw hammer” or “frailing style.” I’d been exposed to folk music later on, but I’d never been exposed to southern folk music, and it wasn’t until I got into college that I suddenly got the notion that I wanted to play the banjo. I think Pete Seeger was a big influence in that, so I found an instructor, and he asked me if I wanted to play claw hammer banjo or if I wanted to play bluegrass banjo. I told him I didn’t know anything, and he described the differences. Bluegrass: it’s three-finger pickin’, Earl Scruggs style, and claw hammer you come down with the index finger or middle finger and the thumb drones on the 5th string. So he described it and I decided to do claw hammer, and he showed me that and told me some records to listen like Tommy Jarrell, Clarence Ashley, Fred Cockerham, Dock Boggs—he doesn’t really play claw hammer—and Roscoe Holcomb, who really doesn’t play claw hammer either, but he plays some.

BD: Would you say that as far as bluegrass goes, that it, as a style, came about with Bill Monroe, Earl Scruggs and the like, and that before that it was some sort of pre-genre music?

Danny: The time when Bill Monroe was around country music, bluegrass music, old-time music, all that was the same... everybody considered it the same. There were differences, but it didn’t get stratified till later on. Right now, bluegrass has become real jazzy. It’s gone in another direction.

Doug: We played with a bluegrass band called Head For The Hills in Olympia on St. Patrick’s Day, and they were super cool and Dan observed that the bluegrass dance is the same as the hippy jam band dance.

Danny: Some people tell me you can’t dance to bluegrass, but you kind of *prance*. You can prance, you can revolve your body and do the wiggle thing.

“We’re like wild vegetables,
kind of small and all-pervasive
and nutritious.”

Dan T.: I saw some people attempting to do an Irish jig to a bluegrass song, and that for some reason, depressed the hell out of me... I don’t know why.

BD: So there are certain dances for the music.

Dan T.: Yes.

Danny: Well, bluegrass is real fast and technical... old-time music was made for dancing, for square dancing. Bluegrass is a lot more virtuosic, and it was also a lot faster, so you couldn’t really dance to it, per se, like you could old-time music. Like the hippy dancing and whatever, bluegrass has this back beat and it’s fast, so you can’t really dance to it like you can old-time music and so you end up swirling around. Bluegrass is more performance oriented. The old fiddle tunes were made for dancing. Also, bluegrass was coming out at about the same time as the first records were being made, so it became more of a performance medium. There were people like The Skillet Lickers who were performance-oriented. Other records were coming out, people were becoming famous and making a living playing music, so it started becoming more performance and entertainment oriented, whereas the old music, pre-radio, pre-records, all that was just people making music in their backyards.

BD: There’s a feeling with the type of music you play that’s down home, like anyone is welcome to play. Learn a couple of chords and jump in.

Doug: I think it’s pretty cool how many people—that whenever we’re playing a show—someone will come up and be like, “Hey guys, can I sit in with you and play this?” This tour we’ve played with so many old-time bands that there ends up being a jam almost every night. We just get together with the people who come to the shows, or the other bands, and just jam out, and that’s cool. It’s very participatory.

Danny: Charles Seeger, Pete Seeger's dad, said something along the lines of, "The musical strength of a culture is not measured by the number of virtuosos, but by the number of people who actually play or participate in the music." I think that's very pertinent. If you can get everybody playing and singing lullabies and work songs—people singing all the time—and make music part of culture and part of everyone's daily experiences, instead of people just listening to some superstar on the radio, and feeling like music is very distant.

BD: Like *American Idol*?

Danny: Yeah, you have to watch TV, watch these virtuosos, and watch them get Simon's approval or whatever.

Dan T.: [sarcastically] I feel like I need Simon's approval sometimes.

BD: What do you think Simon would say about your fiddle playing?

Danny: Yeah, what would Simon say about your fiddle playing?

Dan T.: Well, I guess, first I'd have to imagine that I care.

Danny: Old-time music is easier. There's fewer chords and stuff, but you have to listen to it for a long time and get it in your head.

Dan T.: People come up and ask sometimes, "What kind of music do you listen to?" and I say when I'm at home I put on some fiddle tune, press repeat, and listen to it for hours and hours.

Danny: You've got to let it seep into your head, then you try to play it.

Dan T.: Unless you're really good at music, which I ain't.

BD: Do the songs you play come out the same as you hear them?

Danny: Not always and that's not a bad thing.

Dan T.: That's your goal, but it's more about sounding good than duplicating exactly what things are. Like "Cotton Eye Joe," there's hundreds of ways to play it.

Danny: With bluegrass it can be a very set formula, like, "This is how Bill Monroe played it and you have to play it this way."

Dan T.: We played with this bluegrass band that had this fiddler sit in with them, who didn't normally play with them, and they played "Old Joe Clark," and I didn't know it was "Old Joe Clark" until they told us—after they played it—"cause it was all over the place. I think he played every other note on the fiddle. It'd be 2/3's of the notes.

Danny: Modern bluegrass is a lot of improvisation. Our songs are very constructed. We play them the same way they're arranged.

Dan T.: There are little nuances...

Danny: We're not exactly reproducing old tunes.

Dan T.: Like most tunes I play, I usually play them slightly different every time through. If that's on purpose, I don't know, but I like to think that I'm exercising some kind of self-expression through minute variations that only I and maybe Danny Spurr notice.

BD: Do you ever get people asking you why in 2005 are you playing old-time music?

Danny: What I've been working on lately is getting turntables in there. There's a really cool guy in the New London area. He scratches and stuff—a turntablists—we've been doing some stuff with having him scratch over Can Kickers tracks. I want to get him some old-time records and have him scratch old-time records, and stuff like that.

Dan T.: He's got a vision.

Danny: That's where I want to go. I'm serious. We have a track that we recorded—Jeremy Dale has a copy of it—according to Jeremy Dale, it's the new "Macarena." Hip-hop comes from all that blues and gospel stuff...

Dan T.: Folk art...

Danny: People playing music with whatever they had. If they had turntables, they might have used them.

BD: So folk music is not just old country and blues?

Dan T.: According Bill Dillof, folk music cannot have commercial intent.

BD: Who is Bill Dillof?

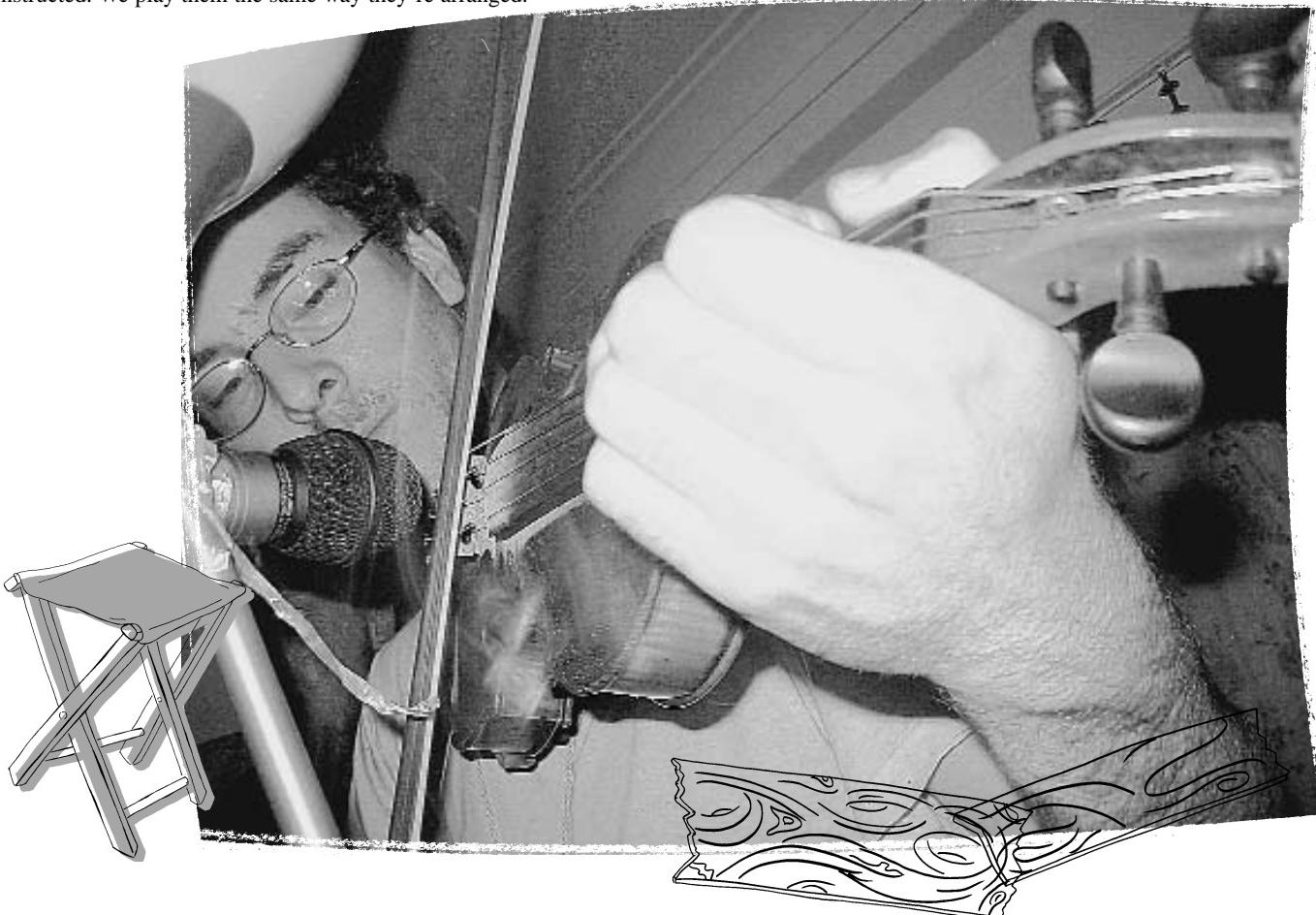
Dan T.: He's an ex-lawyer who plays old-time music in upstate New York, and he's kind of a pseudo-expert on reproducing the sounds found on old 78 recordings.

Danny: He's trying to replicate the sound of a 78, a kind of purist you might say.

BD: You all went to college, right?

Danny: We all went and met at Connecticut College in New London, Connecticut. I majored in botany.

BD: So are you fairly knowledgeable with plants?



Danny: I was. I've forgotten quite a bit, but that's what I studied.

BD: I want to say that you're a botanist banjo player.

Danny: I'm a botanist. I know many plants, and I have grown plants over the year, like eating plants and looking plants.

BD: If The Can Kickers were a plant, what would you be?

Danny: A skunk cabbage. It's good eatin', kind of smells sometimes, it likes moisture. Kind of like poke weed. We're very nutritious. We're like wild vegetables, kind of small and all-pervasive and nutritious.

BD: How about Doug?

Doug: It's the same as Danny except I have an English degree. I don't know shit about plants.

Danny: So what do you know about, then?

Doug: Oh, I know about dangling participles and prepositions.

BD: You're working on a novel of sorts right now?

Doug: You could call it fiction. It's a tour diary of The Can Kickers on the road for three tours, and it covers about a hundred days on the road. I think it was two forty-five day tours and a thirty-day tour, so it may be over a hundred days.

BD: You'll publish it yourself?

Doug: Yeah or I'll find one of my friends to put it out or something.

BD: You also handle all the booking for The Can Kickers.

Doug: Yeah, I get a booking fee now, paid to the band, by the band, for the band. Booking your own tour is a lot of hard work, but it's worth it 'cause it makes you appreciate how hard it is to get a show. And you have control over where you want to go, and who you hang out with, how much you get paid. It's fun, but it's a lot of work and there's no denying it. A lot of bands book their on tours, and it's good. It's a good way to get out. If you depend on someone else to do it for you, most likely they won't. So I'd rather do it myself 'cause I'm kind of a control freak. It's so much better touring when you are in complete control and you know where you are going.

BD: And you, Dan T.?

Dan T.: Well, I was raised in Bethany, Connecticut, the middle of five children. I went to Bethany Middle School and there I learned, arithmetic, grammar, and all the important things that you need to know growing up as an American youth. From that point, I moved on and went to junior high school. That was in either in Orange or Woodbridge. Shout out to the Spartans if you're out there. Then after that I moved on to the high school. You know, maybe I'm rushing through this.

BD: We're almost out of tape.

Dan T.: I went to college and entered the field of environmental studies. When I got into college, I was into computers...

BD: No fiddles?

Dan T.: Fiddles weren't even in the picture at this point. I met this professor I thought was exciting, so I ended up pursuing environmental studies, running around in the woods picking rotten pears out of fruit trees, and I probably learned a few things, but I've forgotten them.

BD: Has there been anything interesting happen lately?

Dan T.: While we were playing in San Pedro last night, Rawl bit me on the arm. Yeah, he bit me right on the arm. It freaked me out a little bit, 'cause I wasn't sure who it was, and I kicked him, then a little bit later I felt bad that I kicked him. It was just a little love bite.

Doug: We played a three-day documentary film festival called the True False Documentary Film Festival in Columbia, Missouri. All we had to do was play short sets in front of these radical subversive documentaries.

We got to stay in a ranch house, we got free food, they bought us hotel rooms, and one night we're playing in this theater called the Rag Tag Theater, which is this real cool DIY theater. Guy from Fugazi was there, and Matt Bakula from The Counterclockwise and the Haints was there, and we're rockin' out and Bakula, under the pretense of fixing the sound board goes, "Hey, guess who's in back?" and I'm like, "I don't know." So he tells me. I've got a Minor Threat tattoo, and I'm a pretty big Discord fan. Then we play, and Ben Rhyne comes up and puts his arm around Guy and says, "I've just got to tell you, we've got all your stuff, and here's all our stuff." And he hands him a CD and so I hand him one and he shakes

my hand and says, "You're a good drummer," and I was like, "Can I die right now?" So I handed him a button and was like, "I like you guys, too." That same week we played with the Haints in Kirksville, Missouri. It was like San Pedro last night, all those Killer Dreamer guys were like, "This is a little hick town, but you're going to have a good time," and they were right. Kirksville, Missouri is the same way. You wouldn't go there unless you had a reason to, and we played the most bitchin' house show there.

BD: Do you think smaller towns are different from larger towns?

Doug: They love it! Dude, smaller towns are the way to go—for the most part—like we've had a good time in L.A., but New York has been difficult. Big cities have all these hipsters, which is not cool, but Kirksville, San Pedro, little towns like that, are some of the best.

BD: I heard you played a show on a moving school bus?

Doug: Yeah. That was in Columbia, Missouri. They took us out to this cattle auction. The film festival people set up this cattle auction barn for us, The Counterclockwise, and The Pine Hill Haints to play in. We played a set on the bus on the way out there and Dan T. got knocked over. He was playing his fiddle, we're all standing up in the school bus, the driver slams on the brakes, and he fell.

BD: How was tonight?

Doug: It's wicked-hella-mad-choice, dude.

BD: Is there a band philosophy?

Doug: Our philosophy is that we've never had a philosophy.

Danny: Or if we do, it's well hidden.



DEAD MOON



Fred Cole guitars and vocals * Toody Cole bass and vocals * Andrew Loomis drums

SAY HELLO TO FRED AND TOODY COLE, two-thirds of Dead Moon and two people who have been doing it themselves since before that term became commonplace. They've been entrenched in underground rock'n'roll since its very beginnings forty years ago, from the West Coast psychedelic scene of the mid-'60s, to Portland's unbelievable punk scene in the late '70s, and still slugging it out today. They've been married for almost as long, to boot.

But their DIY spirit isn't just limited to music. To escape the draft during the Vietnam War, they built a cabin in the Yukon Territory and survived by fishing and hunting bears. They've run a guitar repair shop since the early '70s first as

Captain Whizeagle's and currently as Tombstone Music that provided a lot of the musical equipment for Portland's punk explosion. Not only have they put out their own records, they've cut the masters for their own records on the same disc cutter used to make Louie Louie by the Kingsmen. And when Colin and I got off the bus to interview them, they were scraping linoleum off the foundation of a demolished building, for crying out loud.

What does Dead Moon sound like? Pretty much what you'd expect: forty fucking years of rock'n'roll, condensed and detonated by three people who have lived through it all. Raw and passionate and real and truly one of a kind.



Introduction by Josh Lane
Interview by Colin Sanders
and Josh Lane

Photos by Chrystaei Branchaw

Colin: What would you guys say is your relationship with Portland?

Toody: I was born here, so was Andrew. I've lived here my whole life with the exception of a couple of times when we lived in L.A. and homesteaded in the Yukon. Fred's pretty local. He was born in Tacoma. So, we're all from the Northwest, but for me and Andrew, this is it, this is home. We've been all over the world and Portland still rules. [laughs]

Fred: Very cool.

Colin: What caused those moves to L.A. and the Yukon?

Fred: Boredom. [laughs]

Toody: L.A. was about music. Unlike now, where you can finance your own record proj-

ect or burn your own CDs, there was really no alternative at that point. We're talking '67, '68, and then we went back in '71 and '72. If you wanted to try and get a record deal happening, that was pretty much it. They weren't really looking at little pueblos like Portland, which was a fairly small town at that point, considering things. The Yukon... we were actually headed to Alaska and our vehicle broke down outside of Whitehorse. These guys gave us a ride and put us up for a couple of days while we got things happening. And we found out that you didn't have to be a Canadian citizen to homestead in the Yukon. They were trying to get anybody to live there. Pretty much everybody in Whitehorse was from all over.

Fred: And it was crazy because you had to homestead a minimum of a hundred acres. So we staked out this whole lake. We lived on top of a hill on a lake thirty miles outside of Whitehorse. It was beautiful, and we thought, "Oh, fuck." But we didn't have any money, so we were shooting game and living off the land, basically.

Toody: Catching fish...

Fred: Built a cabin and the whole nine yards. And then... my birthday's August 28th, and we got hit with a snowstorm on my birthday. I thought, Oh my God, this is gonna be colder than fuck.

Toody: And we had two little kids. Amanda was about three and Weeden was about a year and a half old.

Fred: The locals are going, "When it starts getting seventy below zero up here, you have to wear something over your face to defrost the

air or else your lungs will freeze." And we're goin', "Holy shit!" So it was about a week before Christmas. We were just freezing our asses off. It was so fucking cold that we threw the two kids in the pickup and the four of us hauled ass, seventy-two hours of driving, straight from the Yukon to Portland to celebrate Christmas.

Toody: We were just gonna go into town and he goes, "Hey, I'd like to surprise ya. You wanna go home for Christmas?"

Fred: So we came all the way back from Portland for Christmas. Turned around on January first or second and went to drive back up and the border wouldn't let us through. They said, "You guys are here illegally."

Toody: "You lied to us at the border. You said you were just going through Canada to Alaska," and we go, "Yeah, that was our intention."

Fred: But we broke down.

Toody: And this is when everybody was dodging the draft, so they just refused to let us back across the border.

Fred: So we lost everything we had in the world. All we had was what we came down to Portland with, which was the clothes on our backs.

Toody: It was one kick in the ass experience. It was awesome. [laughs]

Fred: So we wrote letters to everybody up there and said, "Just break into our cabin, take everything, whatever the fuck."

Toody: That was kinda the lay of the land. Anything that's abandoned for more than six months belongs to whomever.

Fred: So yeah, we lost all that. Lost the homestead rights because you have to be there...

Toody: Ten years, I think.

Fred: They wouldn't let us back in...

Toody: And that's how that happened.

Josh: What made you guys want to move to Alaska?

Toody: His grandma had lived there and he had always dreamed of being a bush pilot, you name it. Shit, we were like nineteen years old at the time. That's when crazy shit appeals to you.

Fred: I was a pilot at fifteen, before it was legal for me to drive a car.

Toody: It was the final frontier and he was going through another "I've had it with music. That's it. Let's just get the fuck out of here."

Fred: I was gonna become a bush pilot, start up some little funky kind of store and sell, shit... bait, I don't know.

Josh: So you started out as a lounge singer?

Fred: Well, not a lounge singer, but I was in a lounge band.

Toody: Playin' bass.

Fred: Playin' bass, and I sang, too, but all the songs I picked out to sing were Stones or Beatles or something. Actually, the band that I was in was the backup band for Frank Sinatra, Jr.

Toody: They wore the costumes...

Fred: Oh God, it was horrible. And if I moved onstage at all, I'd get these glares from him, like, "Don't you make any movements, don't you cause any interest, because I'm the star here and you guys are just the backup band." I'd sit there frozen when I'd play. My other one—this is when I was like sixteen—we got hired to play this place called the Colonial House, which was on the strip, and it was one of the first topless go-go places. We get this gig and we're all excited. Six days a week and I was gonna make \$125 a week.

Toody: Do you realize how much money that was back then? This is like '65 or '66.

Fred: It was incredible. I was like, "Oh fuck, this is the best thing ever." And I wasn't old

enough to be onstage, so I had to stay in the kitchen until it was time to play. So the first night, I get onstage and I wasn't even sure what was going on at this place. And here comes all these chicks up there and they start doing their go-go dancing thing, like four chicks on stage with us. I'm on the end and I get these two girls beside me. All of a sudden they start undoing their bras and hanging out big fuckin' boobs... I was so fuckin' dumbstruck. I couldn't remember anything. I couldn't even remember that I was fuckin' playing. All I could was stare at these boobs. It took me about four gigs to get over it. Everybody's going, "Man, it's just boobs," and I'm goin', "Man! Man!" "Just concentrate on playing." That was a riot. Then I got sick of that. I got tired of playing all this copied material and what I called "uncool shit," so that's when the Weeds started. One of the guys that was in the Lords, the organ player, Ed Grabner, started the Weeds. We got Ed Bowen, who had been kicked out of a band called the Us, which also had Tim Rockson and Bob Atkins of the Lollipop Shoppe. So we slowly started pulling people out of bands that were from L.A. And, because the Weeds had warrants out for their arrest—Ron had the cops looking for him because he was a runaway—we were all worried about the draft...

Toody: Everybody was getting draft notices.
Fred: We were moving constantly to change our addresses, so we'd keep going back and saying, "Well, we didn't get the notice in time so we couldn't take our induction." So they kept sending us letters and as soon as we'd get a letter, we'd move. [laughs] We moved around Vegas like seven times in four months and it was just getting too risky, so we said, "Let's go to Alaska or Canada or just get the fuck out of the States," but then we broke down in Portland.

Toody: Ran outta gas. And money. [laughs]
Fred: So we asked this girl on the street if there was a place where we could set up our gear and play and make enough gas money to get to Canada, and she goes, "Yeah, this place called the Folk Singer. Yeah, you could do that." So we go to this place, Toody's in the back room. She's a volunteer sweeping up. The owner of the place is there and he says, "Yeah, just bring your gear in here and set up." And I said, "For money or what?" He says, "No, just to audition, see if we're gonna hire you in the club." "Okay, but how long until we can get a gig?" "A couple of days or something." And we're absolutely broke, didn't have any money at all. We had an old '64 Ford Galaxie that was beat to shit at that point. We took the seats out of it and put our gear in there. Three of us would take turns sleeping on the gear as we were making the drives, and that's all we had. So we audi-



What would it take to stop you guys?

Q:

tioned and the guy says, "I want to hire you and I want to manage you and I can make you guys beaucoup bucks," so we decided to stay in Portland.

Toody: You were here for about a year and a half.

Fred: Things just snowballed up here. Started out playing a few places and then places started packing out. We were playing two or three gigs every weekend night; open up at one club, next club we'd be middle slot, and then we'd be the headliner at the next club. Whatever, we didn't care. We had gigs. [laughs] Beaverton was going on—there was the B Street Corral, there was the Headless Horseman downtown...

Toody: A shitload of just teenage clubs.

Fred: And we were playing colleges: Reed College, Portland State...

Toody: Big music scene, a lot of demand and very few bands. It was ideal.

Fred: Then the manager that we had, Whitey

Davis, sent us down to San Francisco, so we moved down there, lived there for almost a year, playing the Avalon and the Western Front and the various clubs that were down there.

Josh: And that was still the Weeds?

Fred: Yeah.

Josh: Why did the Weeds have to change their name to the Lollipop Shoppe?

Fred: Because we signed with Lord Tim, who was the manager of the Seeds. We went to L.A. after San Francisco just to see if there was any interest in our stuff, and the first place we walked into was this Lord Tim Productions. He goes, "Yeah, I'd like to sign you and make a record, but we have a problem with your name. I'm also the manager of the Seeds and I want to put you guys together on bills."

Toody: There were probably several other bands in other parts of the country using that same name.

Fred: Then he said, "I wanna put you guys in a kind of bubblegum thing."



A: Death

Toody: There was a big market for that back then.

Fred: "Gonna make so much money," blah blah blah. Yeah, okay, so we cut our hair down to a presentable length...

Toody: He was the one dissenting vote, by the way, but majority rules.

Fred: We signed to Uni Records, which at that time was a brand new company. Neil Diamond had just signed to it...

Toody: Elton John, the Peanut Butter Conspiracy...

Fred: They had all these practice spaces at Uni Records where we were all practicing, and it was funny because we were like, "Who are all these people?"

Josh: Didn't the Lollipop Shoppe got locked into a recording studio at one point?

Toody: That was the Weeds. Whitey used to do that, because those guys would go, "Why do we need to practice? We're playing shows ten times a week."

Fred: He used to lock us in the basement.

Toody: He used to lock you in the Folk Singer, too, but then they figured out how to use the fire escape.

Fred: He'd lock us in there for two hours and say, "When I hear music in there for two hours, you can go." Then we finally got smart enough to where we had an hour-long tape of ourselves and we'd play that through the PA and climb out the fire escape. Come back an hour later, "Oh, yeah, wow, we really got a lot done." Prisoners of rock and roll.

Toody: We still hate to practice. [laughs]

Fred: Just do it on stage.

Colin: So at that audition at the Folk Singer, is that where the two of you met?

Fred: I saw her for the first time. We didn't actually meet. She came and saw us at Reed College and that's where we actually first got introduced to each other. I saw her back there sweeping up at the Folk Singer and said, "Whoa, who's that?" And every-

body's like, "Oh, forget about it. She doesn't like guys."

Toody: I was very shy. I was a Catholic girl. It was like, "Dude, forget about it."

Fred: I go, "Oh, really?"

Colin: Did you have a bad reputation?

Toody: Please!

Fred: I had a real bad reputation.

Toody: Eighteen years old, tall and skinny with shoulder-length curly hair, lead singer of a band... that was insane. [laughs]

Fred: And in those days, there were no restrictions to anything.

Toody: Take no prisoners.

Colin: How did you finally win her over and convince her?

Fred: We just sat down and talked one night. I'd seen her a couple of times. I invited her for dinner... We were on a budget—I got forty cents a day—and there was a place downtown called Ethel's. All you can eat for a quarter and it was in skid row. So I invited her and her girlfriend, and it was nothin' but bums and garbage cans with lids on them that you could sit on.

Toody: So me and my girlfriend sat on garbage cans and watched them eat this ugly swill.

Fred: It was like stew, but it was nothin' but lumpy gristle. You couldn't get anything down. It was basically broth and bread for twenty-five cents.

Toody: This was when Burnside still was skid row, basically.

Fred: So that was big date with her. The next time I took her out to a park after a gig. I was totally hooked on red licorice at the time, so I said, "Okay, I'm gonna really splurge. I'm gonna save my dinner money," and I bought a big package of Red Vines that were like twenty-five cents. We sat in the park and ate red licorice and talked until five in the morning.

Toody: I just figured he would be this conceited, bubble-headed, jocky whatever and he was completely nothing like that at all.

Fred: We hit it off and we've been pretty much inseparable after that.

Toody: Have been ever since. Thirty-eight years later...

Colin: So back to the Lollipop Shoppe, how did that dissolve?

Fred: They put us on a subsidiary of Uni Records called Shamley and we did these two horrible songs and we were so disgusted with the direction that the company was putting us in that we said, "Man, that's it." We had done this National Dairy Association television thing...

Toody: It was just getting embarrassing.

Fred: "We gotta get the fuck outta here." We were on a five year contract, and I thought we were gonna get arrested if we split on the contract, so we just packed up all our shit one night and split. Didn't tell anybody where we were going, went back to Portland, and played



under the name Underground Railroad. Every time we'd get mail, every time somebody would knock at the door, we thought, Man, they're here to arrest us. Finally, we said, "I guess they don't care." Once that dissolved, we just said, "Let's bag it," and that's when decided to go to the Yukon. Everybody just went their own way.

Colin: And what happened between that and the formation of the Rats?

Fred: Shit, man, a lot. When I came back to town, I did a thing called Cole Buzzel, which was an acoustic thing with Ron from the Lollipop Shoppe, and he and I did this thing

kind of like Seals and Crofts but with original songs. Then we got sick of that and I did an acoustic thing for a while. Then I really got fed up and said, "Let's start rock and roll again." So we did a whole bunch of different funky little bands. Ed and I were in a band called Mule for a while—stuff that we didn't record or anything. We were doing original stuff but nothing really came together.

Toody: Except Zipper, that's the only thing.

Fred: Then I started Zipper when I was about twenty-five and we put an album out. We were playing locally all over the place. Then that broke up.

Toody: He got tired of just lead singing.

Fred: I started King Bee because I was just sick of this heavy metal shit, so I wanted to start playing guitar. I'd just been a lead singer until that point. I played guitar but never on stage. We ended up getting a gig with the Ramones, and this was their debut in Portland. We were the opening band on that gig, them and...

Toody: Tom Petty.

Fred: Yeah.

Toody: Go figure, right?

Fred: So I checked out the Ramones and thought, Oh fuck, this is *so cool*.

Toody: Energy!

Fred: And that put me in the direction of the punk trip. At that point, I was way more into the Ramones. I liked the Sex Pistols fly-by-night kinda scene, but I really liked the power of the Ramones.

Toody: We liked the idea of the Sex Pistols. I had never played bass before, our drummer had never played drums before, Fred was just starting to learn how to play electric guitar, and we liked their attitude of...

Fred: Whatever. Whatever the fuck.

Toody: "Anybody can play punk rock. Gimme an instrument and let me go."

Fred: So we started the Rats. We were all born in 1948, which was the Chinese year of the rat. We just started playing one- and two-chord songs that I'd written that we could kinda handle.

Toody: Everybody else was kind of at the same starting point. Most everybody was just learning their shit and that was half the charm of it. [laughs]

Fred: We did that for about eight years, the Rats, and we ended up getting pretty good and kinda knowing our shit. Then we got real sick that scene and decided to go into country and western. We started playing what we called "cowpunk," which was just all kinds of country-flavored stuff. Then we got sick of that and Toody and I took off and went to Reno for a whole summer and did nothing but old standard country and old standard rock and roll songs with a drumming unit. Played all these funky little mining towns with the guys coming in totally black because they just got out of the mines. And we spent all our time gambling.

Toody: It was fucking great.

Fred: Play and gamble. Play and gamble. All summer long, just living in the back of our Volkswagen van.

Toody: Just another adventure. [laughs]

Fred: We even got busted one night. We were camped by the side of the road. Here come the cops at about six in the morning, shining flashlights and shit.

Toody: Out of nowhere, too.

Fred: They get us out of the van, hands in the air, the whole nine yards. We go, "What's going on?" "We're looking for the bodies that you dropped over the cliff." And we're like,

"WHAT?" "The woman at the top of the hill claims that you drove in last night and you were tossing bodies out of the back of your van into the ravine." And the cops are down there with their flashlights and shit, looking all over the place, and I go, "What in the fuck?" And he goes, "Well, she sees a lot of stuff and she's a crazy old lady but we gotta check it out anyway. And just so you know, this is really not a good place to park because she's gonna report you every time and we're gonna have to come out and do the same thing."

Colin: Did you consider the Rats a punk band at the time?

Fred: Yeah, yeah.

Toody: We tended to be a little bit more melodic than a lot of the punk bands because of his style of writing and because we were older and it wasn't like, "RARARARA AHHH!" There was a lot of actual singing involved. But it was on that edge. At that point, punk covered a really huge umbrella.

Fred: It was more of an attitude than the music.

Toody: Like the Wipers were sort of considered a punk band but they never really were either. Greg Sage was like, "Ah, I was never

We just learned, I don't know, four songs that we kinda had down, real simple stuff. Two weeks after I first started playing, he goes, "Okay, don't freak out, but we're gonna go play this party." And I'm like, "What? No, no way, man. I can't. Oh, I can't do it." "It'll be fine. Just have a beer or whatever and get up there and you'll be fine." So there was no messing around. It was just basically getting in front of a group and going, "Hi!" It took a lot of years to get really comfortable with it and now I love it.

Josh: So how did Dead Moon start?

Fred: That's mostly because of the boredom from the country and western shit that we were doing. [laughs] We were just like, "Fuck, let's just go back and play normal fuckin' rock and roll songs that I haven't written."

Toody: It was all cover stuff.

Fred: Lots of material from the '60s that we liked and just played a few shows here in Portland and just have fun. Not worry about putting records out or anything.

Toody: We had no expectations, which is the funny thing, because we worked so hard to have the Rats go someplace, you know?

ten times more!" We played like three Mondays in a row, and at the third one, there was like fifty people who showed up, and besides that, we started getting other gig offers. It just snowballed from there.

Toody: We played as much as we could, and just slowly started working original stuff in.

Fred: We were opening for everybody, anybody, and everybody. We just needed to get practice.

Toody: And stage experience.

Colin: Why'd you decide on Andrew as the drummer?

Toody: You've met Andrew. How could you not decide on Andrew?

Fred: We always thought Andrew would fit real good with us, but we just never had a chance to try. We tried it in the country thing. We had him come out and play in that and he just could not get the country thing down. It was like, "We definitely want to do a band with you, but it's not gonna be country. It's gonna have to be a rock and roll thing." When we came up with Dead Moon and the idea of that, we said, "Oh, Andrew would fit really well."



**They get us out of the van, hands in the air,
the whole nine yards. We go, "What's going on?"
"We're looking for the bodies that you dropped
over the cliff."**

-Fred

really into punk." It just happened to be what was happening at the time and it kinda got that label, just like alternative. Everybody was alternative, regardless of what you were doing. **Colin:** It seems like a lot of people in that scene talk about how it was so amazing to be a part of...

Toody: It was.

Colin: A lot of people are like, "Well, I don't want to bitch about the past and how great it was, but things are a lot easier now and it was so hard back then just to get one show."

Toody: True, but there was so much more going on and the turnout was there. The camaraderie was there, and, for us, it was really awesome because it was the second coming of what it was like when we eighteen and nineteen years old and the whole psychedelic scene was going on in Portland. It was really cool in that aspect to have lived through it twice.

Colin: And Toody, that was your first band?

Toody: The Rats, yeah.

Colin: How exciting was that?

Toody: It was the scariest thing I've ever done. Like I said, I used to be incredibly shy. Bass was Fred's first instrument, so he just taught me a few things. I'm left-handed. I could never find a short-scale left-handed bass, so I just learned how to do it right-handed. So it was awkward for me to begin with.

Fred: Our first show was at the Long Goodbye, which had shut down and reopened as a comedy club. I got in touch with the guy and said, "Man, you know, I wanna get a gig," and he goes, "Well, the only thing I have is Monday night after the comedy acts and you guys can come and set up after the show." We go down there and there's about twelve people sitting around telling jokes.

Toody: Total amateur night. [laughs]

Fred: All of them are really fucking awful, and we're going, "Oh my God." These guys are all taking turns going up on stage and doing their monologues. They get done and it's like ten, eleven o'clock at night, and everybody leaves except us. It was us, the bartender, and one or two people who just walked in, like, "What's going on?" "It's a dollar cover." "Why?" "Well, because we have a band." And we're playing for the door money.

Toody: Naturally.

Fred: We played probably a half-hour or forty-five minute set, all the songs that we knew, and the bartender goes, "Well, do you want to come back next Monday?" And we're like, "Yeah, we'll come back." So we got two dollars that night, and the next night that we played, about twenty people showed up, and we made like twenty bucks. "Fuck, this is way cool!" [laughs] "We're doubling our shit here,

Toody: Besides that, he's just perfect. Temperament-wise, looks-wise, we all look like brothers and sisters. It still feels like he's our little brother. Having a band is just like meeting a friend or a girlfriend or whatever. There's just certain chemistry right off the bat, and you know how hard that is to come by. So when you find it, stick with it.

Colin: Did you think, when you first started, that fifteen years later, Andrew would still be the drummer?

Toody: Oh yeah. I did. He's incredibly loyal. We've gone through all the ups and downs, like anybody does in any kind of relationships, but it's still good.

Fred: I figured if we didn't kill him and he didn't kill us, he'd still be in the band.

Josh: Did you think Dead Moon would actually last this long?

Toody: Not when we first started. We were just kinda winging it and it snowballed from there. Lot of opportunities just happened to fall into our lap. It was really good for us that we took this last year off because we really needed a break.

Fred: She had tendonitis so bad that she couldn't even pick up a bass.

Toody: It worked out well. We had a bunch of stuff we had to deal with. Andrew's mom got really, really ill and died over the summer. He

was freaking the last three years, especially on the road that much and always having nightmares, because she was in her eighties. So it was good that he happened to be home for that. It was just a really good break. Now that we started playing again, that enthusiasm, that spark, is back. It's exciting and fun again, whereas before it was, "Uhhh, God, another show..."

Colin: Why do you guys tour so much?

Toody: Just because the opportunities kept coming up. We took 2003 off from the road, and we just had all these offers come up. In 2004, we ended up going to Europe in the spring, part of the summer, we were in Australia and New Zealand. We did a tour in Canada for two or three weeks, and then we did a full-on U.S. tour.

Fred: By the time we got home, we were just like, "Man, that's it."

Toody: It just seemed like a good idea at the time. We were all jazzed about going on the road then, and it was biting off more than you can chew. And once you make that commitment, you gotta follow through.

Josh: So you guys didn't tour America for a long time, is that right?

Toody: Europe was just so good. The money was there, it was easy, they fly you in, they put you up in hotels... You go out on the road in the States and you're fighting the van and you're doing overnight drives to save on hotel money, playing for either real small guarantees or for the door in a lot of the small, dinky towns along the way. We just put it off and put it off.

Fred: I think it was like 1996 or something.

Toody: '94, I think. That was the first U.S. tour. And part of the reason was that the guy who used to book us in San Francisco all the time ended up getting his own agency and now he works for the agency in New York. He still does our booking here in the States. He was kinda going up the ladder at the same time we were and it all just happened to meld. Otherwise, we probably still wouldn't have done it. [laughs] It's a lot of work for very little return.

Colin: How did Tombstone Records start?

Fred: At the same time, I had always wanted a disc cutter, because I had had it with sending off tapes to record manufacturing companies forever and the records never came back sounding the way the tapes did.

Toody: Especially all that stuff from the Rats.

Fred: I did all this research and it was because they weren't cutting the masters hot enough. To do it right, I had to get a disc cutter, so I started checking in on that and they were all like a hundred thousand dollars and stuff. I go, "Man, is there any way anybody's got something that's cheap enough to afford?" "Well, there's an old disc cutter down in the basement of Rex Studios. It's been down forever but you can only cut mono records on it." I go, "I don't



I had trained the rats to jump up on my hat and eat marshmallows, so there was a bunch of shit going on. -Fred

give a fuck!" "Well, nobody's ever gonna buy a mono record. It's obsolete." "Well, I don't care. I just wanna buy this thing."

Toody: And you realize that when we first started buying records, everything was mono. That's all they had. So we said, "Works for me!"

Fred: So I call these guys up to see if I could buy this thing and they said, "Well, we don't know if it's for sale." And they give me this fuckin' runaround. I go, "Well, how much

would you want for it?" "I don't know if we wanna sell it."

Toody: "We don't even know if it works."

Fred: "I don't care if it works. I'll put it together." And he goes, "Well, it's all in boxes, parts all over the place. Nobody knows anything about it." I spent about three months with these assholes and finally I gave up and said, "I'll find something else." On my birthday, we were in Reno, and on the way home, I

came up with the name Dead Moon. The moon was coming over the desert and it was just bright fuckin' red, really weird from all the dust and stuff. "Man, Toody, what do you think about the name Blood Moon?" She goes, "I hate it." "Man, that moon is so wicked looking. How about Wicked Moon?" I went through all these things, and finally I said, "What about Dead Moon?"

Toody: And I said, "That's it!"

Fred: So we ended up with that. This is before we even had a band. When we got back into town, she goes, "Your birthday present is the disc cutter. That's the good news. The bad news is that we gotta go pick it up and it's in pieces all over the basement of these guys' place." I called Andrew and told him we were starting a rock and roll band called Dead Moon, and he says, "Oh, yeah, I'm in." So all three of us go down to this place and load up this disc cutter. We can barely get it into our van. We can't even get it through the front door of my house, so I had to take off doors and doorframes and everything else to get it into our house, and we had to get it up all these stairs! We had boxes and boxes of all this shit and all the schematics had been altered and changed, so I spent about three months putting this thing together.

Toody: Luckily, they had the original manual. **Fred:** And I finally got sound. I mean, it was horrible, but it made some sound, and I thought, Oh my God, the son of a bitch is gonna work! So I start going through and fine-tuning everything, and I finally got it to where you could cut something on it and actually be able to hear it, and we cut "Hey Joe" (by Jimi Hendrix) and "Parchment Farm" (by Mose Allison) on it. That was our first thing. And we said, "What are we gonna call it?" "Eh, Tombstone Music, Tombstone Records, whatever." [laughs]

Colin: How did you come up with the name Tombstone Music?

Toody: We were just totally into the cowboy thing at the time. It was from Tombstone, Arizona, basically. And the original building where we were, which has now been torn down, was actually the old general store and post office, so it had the western cut top and it was just this really old fuckin' place.

Fred: It was a motherfucker. It was so bad I had to run gutters on the *inside* of the building to get the water out of there. Water damage all over guitars all the time, every time it rained there'd be an inch of water on the floor... I was into having pet rats at the time, so we had all these running all over the place, and we couldn't figure out why straight people wouldn't come in there. [laughs] And I had trained the rats to jump up on my hat and eat marshmallows, so there was a bunch of shit going on.

Toody: It's our business. If you don't like it, don't come in.

Fred: And they didn't.

Josh: Why did you guys put out your own records for so long? Was it out of necessity?

Fred: We can be on labels if we want, but it's just cool.

Toody: It's about control. It's like we were talking about the Lollipop Shoppe, with them (the record label) having a say-so in your direction. And besides that, obviously, you can see that we love doing everything ourselves.

It's more fun. It is more challenging and all that, but...

Josh: So why have you guys decided to work with other labels, like Empty?

Fred: At different points, we're so busy that we don't have time.

Toody: We basically started working with Empty because they were totally willing—everybody we've worked with, whether it's the 45 we did for Sub Pop or Sympathy for the Record Industry—they've all allowed him to completely produce and cut the masters, do it exactly the way he wants it, come up with the packaging, the artwork, the photos, whatever. And with Empty, we just became so busy that it became a pain in the ass to send out all the promos, do all the follow-up, all that kinda stuff, so we just left that to them. It was basically the same thing, except that we weren't stuck with all the work after we were done with the album.

Josh: And Sub Pop is supposed to put out a box set?

Fred: Supposedly. I mean, I sent them the tapes and we've already signed the contracts, it's just that there's distortion on part of the songs and nobody can figure it out. I just told them that that's us, that's how we sound, and they're like, "We want it more professional."

Toody: You're looking at the wrong band. They're still talking about doing it, but it probably won't be until the spring. They've got enough projects going on that they plan way, way ahead.

Josh: How did that come about?

Toody: God, they contacted us about two years ago, and just wanted to a discography thing, something along the lines of the Wipers' boxed set, just a compilation of the material from all those years.

Colin: I've always been kinda curious about your favorite local bands, past and present.

Toody: Right now, we love playing with the Nightmares. I really like all the stuff that they're into. I was really impressed with Chris Newman's new band, the Divining Rods. Always dug what Louie Samora was doing,

whether it was the Jackals or the Flapjacks. As far as years past, I'd have the Weeds number one. I always loved Sado-Nation, especially the early incarnations... the Wipers, naturally.... Shit, there was a bunch of the punk bands that were just a riot. What was Mike X. King's band?

Fred: The Products.

Toody: The Products! God, they were off the wall.

Fred: The Neo Boys were killer.

Toody: Right now, we really haven't had a chance to hear that many new bands. Over these next few gigs, we're playing with some bands that we haven't even heard before, so we'll see. [laughs]

Colin: I've heard a couple of rumors about a break-up.

Toody: No, I don't know who started that.

Fred: I heard our last show was October 26th, but it's like, "Well, we just played last weekend, so..."

Toody: "And we're playing Friday night!" I mean, that's always gonna be flying. Fred's fifty-seven. I'll be fifty-seven soon, so everybody figures, "Jesus, how long can they do this?"

Fred: Rumors are rumors, you know? All that happens is that they get disproved, so whoever starts them feels like an idiot.

Toody: Somebody told me, "Gee, Toody, I just heard you had to have your hand amputated."

Fred: We heard that she lost her arm, lost her hand, her wrist was broken and it was irreparable, and at one point we heard that she had these long-ass metal pins going through her arm and she had two fake fingers or something. And I lost two of my fingers in a door-jamb but it didn't matter because I only play two-string leads anyway... whatever.

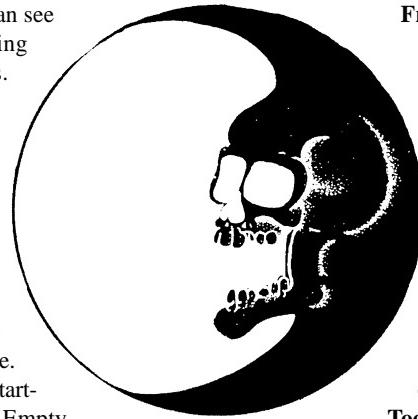
Toody: I don't know where they get started.

Fred: Andrew had varicose veins so bad that he had to get his leg amputated and couldn't play kick drum anymore...

Josh: What would it take to stop you guys? Anything?

Toody: Death. We've all said that it has to be the three of us, and if we stopped, it would have to be because one of us just couldn't go on anymore or just decided we didn't wanna do it, but I don't see that happening in the foreseeable future. It's still a kick in the ass playing.

Fred: Or if people just stopped showing up. We'd probably still play in the basement or something, though.



REGULAT



Various music pundits have tied themselves into knots in an attempt to put their knowing fingers upon just which early-era punk band the Regulations most sound like. Citing almost every well known and semi-known band from the drunken late-'70s West Coast Mabuhay Gardens/Dirk Dirksen scene to Minor Threat and the early '80s burgeoning East Coast straight edge scene, virtually every scribe I've read has ended up twisting him/herself into something resembling the Pretzel Girl, she of Side Show Attraction fame. I know; I did it myself. But, though the real life Pretzel girl is unquestionably cool, I don't know how much all this knotted-up musical nomenclature helps anything.

I dare say, at this point, that it might even be more elucidating to say which early '80s punk bands the Regulations *don't* sound like. For example: They don't sound like Fear. But then again, has any other band ever sounded like Fear? And they definitely don't sound anything like Flipper. But Flipper was most likely designed to be a mindfuck reaction to a lot of the bands of that era whose memory the Regulations now evoke. But even this "via negativa" approach comes up short and stumpy. Plus it doesn't have the sex appeal of having the Pretzel Girl on its side.

Like the old cliché that states "opinions are like assholes," opinions about who the Regulations sound like are basically worthless because every asshole has one.

The problem, of course, is that this is all skating on the surface—when the nerves, muscle, mud, and blood of it all is raging and bucking apoplectically beneath the duct tape veneer of categorization and pigeonholing. And I've been around the block just enough times, in my drunken ice cream truck that frightens all the neighborhood kids, to know that that's precisely where all the cool stuff in life always is: underneath all the words and the poorly affixed labels. Sure, the Regulations have a snot-nosed sound that blasts into your head, simultaneously knocks over the urns of your favorite golden era bands, and breathes new life into them—but the real vicious beauty of this band is in the raw spirit. It's a spirit, or an attitude, or whatever the fuck you want to call it, that resonates with the un-self-conscious, no-bullshit vibe of many of the best bands of punk's pimply, angry, pubic-hair-sprouting adolescence. An era, it could be fairly said, that was before punk fouled its own nest. Or, at very least, an era before the bewitching fool's gold of corporate America subverted the more admirable goals of a musical genre that was at one time known for scoffing at the all-American virtues of conformity and selling out.

I'm probably sounding old and jaded now. But that's just me. Let me stress: there is nothing old or jaded about the Regulations, despite the many retro-attributes laid at their doorstep.

Maybe I can sum it up this way: don't waste too much time trying to figure out who these guys sound like. This band is good enough that it's just a matter of time before all those same Pretzel Girl music scribes start comparing other bands to them. And then we will have come full circle, where the idiot snake eats its idiot tail. Fuck it. This is one of the best bands to come down the pike in a long time. Period. This is not punk out of a museum or packed in a box of mothballs. It's alive right here and now. So, in the words of little Johnny Rotten, "enjoy or die."

TIIONS

Introduction by Aphid Peewit • Interview by Aphid and Todd Taylor • Photos by Rudy Olivarez and Donofthedead • Design by Keith Rosson

Aphid: Were you guys even alive in the early '80s?

Marcus: Yes, all of us.

Aphid: Do you bother reading what critics write about you? What's the most ridiculous, off-the-mark description of your band that you've ever come across?

Marcus: The funniest ever was when we played at a bar here in Umeå with a bigger, sleazy-MTV-wannabe-band and they came up to me and said that we sounded like early Pearl Jam. And he wasn't kidding! I'm always interested in reading what critics write about us, but it's no big deal. It's always fun to see what obscure bands we're compared to.

Aphid: How the hell did a Swedish band like yourself wind up on a punk label based in Minnesota? Does it have anything to do with the fact that our state has a statue of Wilhelm Moberg (Swedish man of letters and historian) standing next to his bicycle?

Marcus: It has nothing to do with Moberg. It's a pretty simple story why we're on Havoc Records. Felix Havoc wrote us and asked if we were interested in working with his label in the USA. We know people who work with him and everyone says that it's great, so we said yes. And now we know that Havoc is the best hardcore label out there. Felix is helping us with whatever we want: he's booking our tours, driving us around the U.S. in his van, and dealing with lots of other stuff like that.

Aphid: Speaking of Minnesota—we have a lot of Swedes here, or people of Swedish heritage. Are you guys nice Lutherans like the watered-down Swedes here in Minnesota or do you actually practice Asatru and worship deities like Odin and Loki?

Marcus: The closest I come to practicing Asatru and worshiping Odin is listening to Bathory, the Viking era. I'm actually listening to Bathory now. Quorthon, R.I.P. People may be surprised to know that both me and Otto are totally into black metal. I like bands like Isengard, Satyricon, Darkthrone, Immortal, and Mayhem—all the old necro stuff—maybe a little more than I should.

Todd: Marcus, Do you have any hidden talents?

Marcus: I can tell you some stuff about the other guys in the band. Robert's great with all kinds of art stuff, Jens is great at cooking—he's a chef—and Otto's a real computer expert.

Aphid: I have a bunch of Swedish relatives and when they came over here, one of the cute girl cousins told me that beaches in Sweden are top-optional. Is that true?

Marcus: Yes, it's top-optional.

Aphid: By any chance have you ever spotted Yngwie Malmsteen topless at a beach and does he have man boobs?

Marcus: I've never seen Yngwie on the beach. I think that he lives in the USA.

Aphid: Do Swedes, in general, have the same fixation with celebrities that we do here in the U.S.? Do you have celebrities in Sweden who could match our American celebrities for utter blandness?

Marcus: Yes, Swedes are, in general, as fascinated with celebrities as you guys are. There are countless celebrities here in Sweden, too, like docu-soaps that are everywhere for five seconds and then gone. It's just too bad that some take longer to disappear.

Aphid: Here in America we have "reality" TV shows, where people get plastic surgery to look just like their favorite celebrity. If you guys were

**WHEN YOU PLAY MUSIC,
YOU HAVE TO GO ALL THE WAY.
THAT'S A BIG PART OF
REGULATIONS.**

on that show and could be made to look just like your favorite early '80s punk rock star, who would you like to look like?

Marcus: Yeah, those plastic surgery shows are funny, but I don't know if I wanna look like anyone in my favorite punk bands.

Aphid: Obviously, the early '80s L.A. band comparisons keep coming up in review after review. What do you think of the early '80s Boston bands like the Freeze, Gang Green, Jerry's Kids, or any of the *This Is Boston, Not L.A.* bands?

Marcus: I love that shit. I don't listen to that shit every day, but it's great hardcore. The three bands you mention above are my favorite Boston hardcore bands, together with the F.U.'s.

Todd: The world is a big place. Lots of things have happened in it over the last thirty years. How and why did a group of four guys in a small town in Sweden tap into a predominantly late-'70s, early '80s West Coast of American punk sound? I mean—and this is a compliment—that the band studied it hard. No distortion on the guitars. Mid-paced punk, tapping beyond the sorta obvious bands like early Bad Religion and Black Flag, but getting to core groups that are often overlooked, like The Cheifs and The Dils. There is obvious intent.

Marcus: We play the music that we love, the music that we've been listening to for many years. One important thing when you play music is that you have to go all the way. That's a big part of Regulations.

Aphid: Being connoisseurs of the early L.A. punk scene, do you ever have "TV parties" and watch old tapes of those TV shows they mention on the Black Flag tune?

Marcus: Those are the only TV shows we ever watch: *Dallas*, *Hill Street Blues*, *Saturday Night Live*...

Aphid: So how much do you think this early '80s punk sound thing is studied and intentional versus how much of it is just kind of serendipitous: just the way you happen to sound?



ONLY EARN MONEY WHEN

Marcus: Regulations sound like we do because we want to sound like this.

Todd: Why are you doing what you do? Did you know you wanted to be in a punk rock band when you were little?

Marcus: I've always been very into music, especially punk, but I was almost twenty years old before I started playing guitar in a band. I can't remember having any dreams of being a punk or being anything else when I was a kid. Anyway, the first time I understood that I wanted to play in a punk band was when I was riding in my parents' car, listening to the first Ebba Grön album on my walkman. I bought a guitar but it took me forever to learn how to play it. The reason that I'm playing punk rock now is that I love it and it's one of the things that I really know how to do. I can't imagine a life without playing in a punk band.

Todd: How did you first hear American punk songs? I ask because Umeå is two "cultural steps" away from L.A. First, you're in a different country that speaks a different language. Second, Umeå is a relatively small town. It's hard for kids in America, especially small towns, to find out about the origins of punk rock.

Marcus: I guess we all discovered punk and hardcore in the late '80s or early '90s and since then we've all dug deeper into the history of punk and hardcore by reading books, talking to people, and looking up things on the internet. Personally, I first got into punk through my dad. He was listening to Ramones, Sex Pistols, and Ebba Grön when I grew

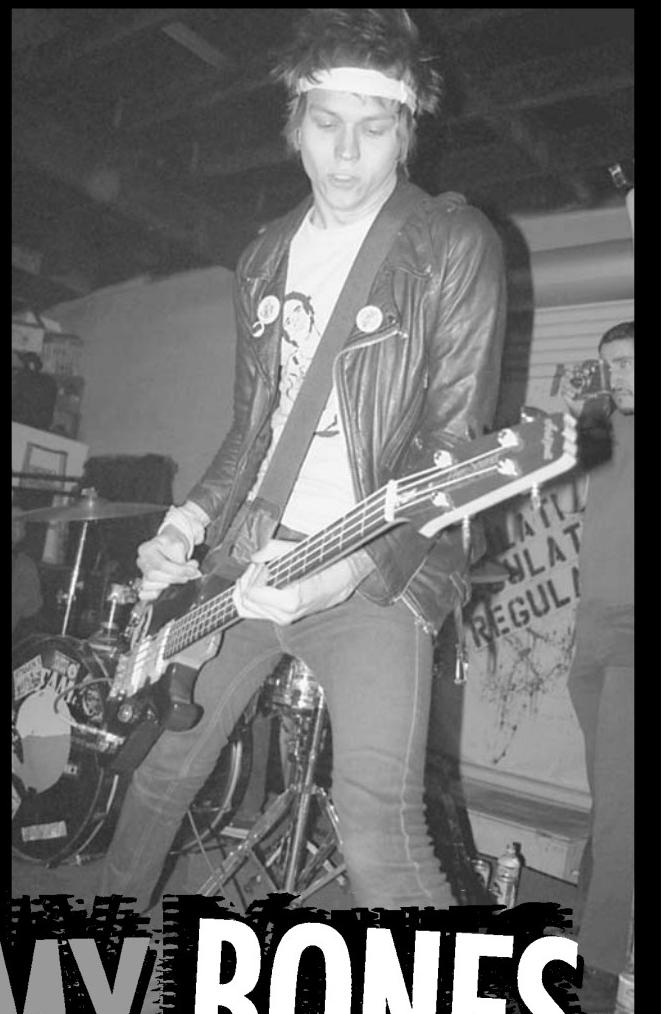
up. When I first discovered hardcore, I luckily got a tape with the Minor Threat discography CD and 80-85 by Bad Religion. I still think that *How Could Hell Be Any Worse?* is one of the best records ever. When I was a kid, it was a big hassle to get good records because I never had any money and we had no good record stores in town. Now it's a lot easier. You can buy stuff through mailorder, distros and stuff, or buy records on tour. But it's not like we're only influenced by the late '70s/ early '80s L.A. punk rock scene. Classic hard rock like AC/DC and Swedish punk are also big influences. I don't think that the "cultural steps" made it harder for me and my friends to get into American punk and hardcore. Most people in Sweden know English and Sweden's pretty Americanized these days.

Todd: What's a lyric you listened to when you were growing up that you got wrong?

Marcus: Since I was listening to lots of English and American music as a kid, I got almost all the lyrics wrong since I couldn't speak English that well. For example, I got all Misfits lyrics wrong and was really surprised the first time I read them.

Todd: You've mentioned Ebba Grön a couple times now. What other Swedish bands help set the stage for current Swedish punk bands?

Marcus: Yes there's lots of great old Swedish punk, but I don't think that many of the current Swedish bands are influenced by them, only a hand-



WHEN I BREAK MY BONES.

ful. I know that we are, and bands like Knugen Faller and Tristess are, too. But I can recommend you all to check out the following bands, as well as Ebba Grön and Asta Kask: Massmedia, Missbrukarna, Kriminella Gitarrer, Attentat, Incest Brothers, Grisen Skriker, and Garbochock.

Aphid: I'm trying to figure out exactly who was in what bands. Now, three of you were in Epileptic Terror Attack?

Marcus: Okay, we can take this one more time. Me, Otto, and Jens were in ExTxA.

Aphid: Was it Robert who played in the Dead Ones?

Marcus: Robert used to play in the Dead Ones.

Aphid: Who was or is in the Vectors? Step Forward?

Marcus: Jens is also playing the Vectors and used to play in Step Forward a long time ago.

Todd: One of your members went to the Vicious. Why'd he leave? Do you still talk to him?

Marcus: No we don't! We threw all his gear into the river, too!

Todd: When the three of you were in ExTxAx—a skate/thrash band in the vein of Life's Halt—was it hard to get into a rhythm with skating in Sweden? You can go all summer, but not at all in the winter? Are there big indoor parks?

Marcus: When we were kids, it was no big trouble skating all year long. During the winter, it was just to put on some warm clothes and go down

to the big indoor garages and skate until you got thrown out. Nowadays, I take it easy during the winter even though we have a pretty good skatepark in Umeå.

Todd: Was it easier to sing about skate rock, coming from a country that if you broke a bone, you knew you wouldn't go bankrupt?

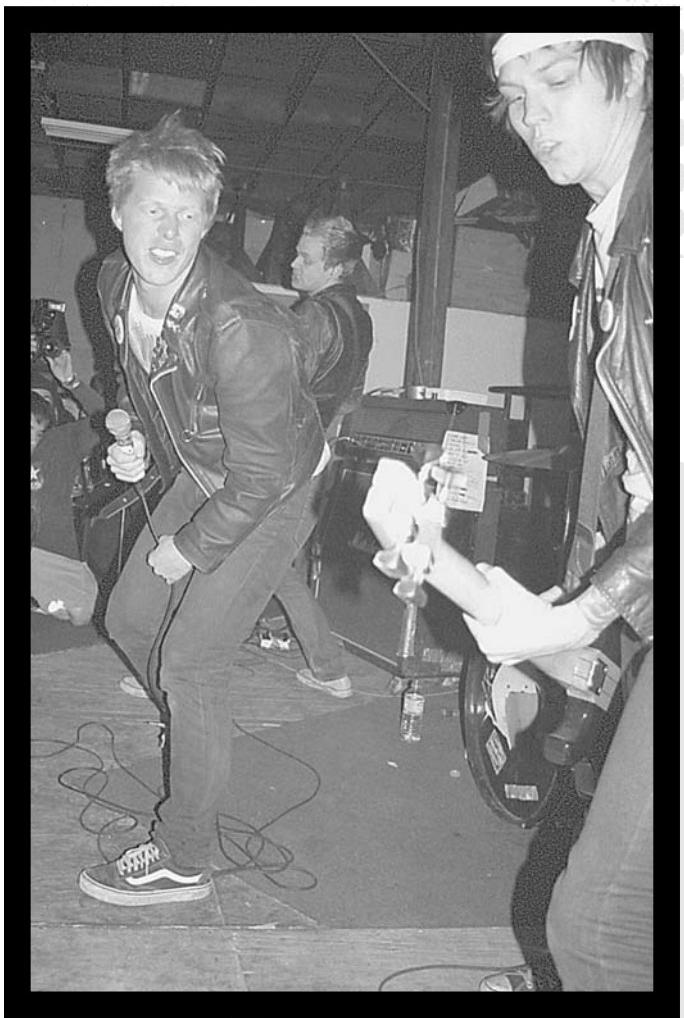
Marcus: I only earn money when I break my bones. I bought a new guitar in the U.S. from the money I got when I broke my ankle.

Todd: You're joking, right?

Marcus: I'm not joking. When I broke my ankle I had just started working with helping old people in their homes. I couldn't work for maybe four to five months so I sick listed—I got money for being disabled—and got my paycheck anyway. But that's not all. After maybe two years, when all surgical operations were done and my ankle was healed, I got money from my insurance company. Okay, it only works like this if you're insured, but that's cheap in Sweden anyway.

Aphid: ExTxAx did a cover of the Circle Jerks' "Don't Care." Do the Regulations do any early '80s covers at all or will you in the future?

Marcus: We've played a song by the Misfits a couple of times, but we'll never do it again. At many shows I've been to I've noticed that the only time the audience gives a fuck is when bands are playing a Minor Threat cover or something like that. It's pretty sad when you think about it. There are actually good bands around today that also write good songs.



Todd: Why break up a fully functioning band and start over?

Marcus: With ExTxA we painted ourselves into a corner. There was no way to go or turn after we recorded that last EP (*We Are the Attack*). Everything was ultrafast and we were getting really sick of that. After ExTxA's U.S. tour 2002 we didn't do anything for several months. We decided to break up the band. Me, Otto, and Jens wanted to keep on playing together, so we started talking about what we wanted to do. We wanted to start over and leave everything we did before behind us. So we went back to the rehearsal space and started working on some songs. Then we asked Robert to join after a couple of weeks.

Todd: Was the transition from ExTxA to Regulations scary?

Marcus: The transition wasn't scary, but it was a big step to take. The songwriting process in Regulations is a lot different than what we've ever done before. We do almost everything together.

Todd: How did you decide on the tempo of Regulations songs? Do you ever just want to drop the hammer down and go full-blast again?

Marcus: We try to make our songs sound as hard and fast as possible. The songs get a faster and more desperate feel when you play them in the right tempo. We always try playing our songs in different tempos before we decide what works out best. And as I said earlier, we're sick of playing everything superfast.

Todd: What doors, musically, are the Regulations excited to open? Do mid-paced songs give you more time for tension?

Marcus: With Regulations, we're not afraid to try all kinds of stuff musically. We're open to all kinds of influences, but we always put our own touch on everything. It's not like we're going to start rapping on the next record or something like that. Our mid-paced tempo

makes it a lot easier to make the songs sound more intense and fast. We can concentrate on playing as hard as physically possible.

Todd: Has anyone in the band ever won a medal or a trophy, even like a science fair in grade school?

Marcus: No science fair medals that I know of. We're not into that kinda stuff. I won a very unpretentious Umeå punk/hardcore skate competition a couple of years ago.

Todd: What's so special about Umeå? It seems like it's becoming the Gainesville or Minneapolis of Sweden. Is there a supportive group of people, labels, and venues that make it all happen or is it a core of people working in a vacuum?

Marcus: It's mostly a small group of people working their asses off. Some people play in bands, others book shows and do record labels or have a distro. It's not a big scene, but lots of good stuff comes out because people are dedicated to what they do.

Aphid: It's a grand and noble tradition in punk to write songs about the police—everyone from the Dead Kennedys to the Exploited to MDC has songs about "the fuzz," as they were called back in those days. You guys have three cop songs that I know of: "Police Siren," "Protect & Serve" and "Police Car." Other than your own, what are your favorite punk rock "police" songs?

Marcus: The best "police" song ever must be "Spräckta Snutskallar" by the Shitlickers. It's one of the best songs ever.

Todd: The cops I saw in Sweden weren't as antagonistic as L.A. cops.

Marcus: Cops can be a drag in Sweden, too.

Aphid: One band that I hear in your music but no one else seems to mention is the Dead Kennedys. Are they an influence for you or do I need to put the bottle down when I listen to your records?

Marcus: We all love the Dead Kennedys and I guess some influences from them can be found on our records.

Aphid: What do you think of the bitter feuding now taking place between Jello Biafra and the other three Dead Kennedys?

Marcus: As I said earlier, I love Dead Kennedys, but this story is only sad. In my opinion, it would be better if they never did this reunion, with or without Jello.

Todd: What do each of you do?

Marcus: We're all unemployed at the moment because we quit our jobs to go on tour.

Todd: Okay, then what job have you had that was a defining moment for you to be in a band?

Marcus: I was in a band before I worked a day in my life, so I don't really know about that. But the last couple of years I've been working with helping old people. The job is really easy and I kinda like it, but I'm never as happy as when I'm telling my boss that I have to quit and go on tour. And when we come back from tour, they always want me back.

Todd: What's a surprising bit of history about Sweden that you suspect the average American wouldn't know about? Like, Norway was fascist for awhile. What's a dark wrinkle in Sweden's past?

Marcus: We used to have a pedophilic king.

Todd: Was he a known pedophile before he got elected? How did he get found out?

Marcus: I don't really know about this one. It was Otto who said that one of our kings in the early 1900 century was a pedophile, but I know that the Swedish people never elected him. The royal family is all about inheritance. I don't know if that's an explanation to why the king and his kids are a bunch of retards. Another way into the royal family is by marriage. For example, if I married our princess Victoria, I would become the king of Sweden. Luckily, the royal family does not lead Sweden. They are just representatives. They're not even allowed to make political statements.

Todd: Graphically, the Regulations are very controlled and direct. Black Flag had Raymond Pettibon. Crass had Gee Voucher. What visual artists influenced how the band represents itself on albums, 7"s, banners, and t-shirts?

Marcus: As with everything else concerning Regulations, we've talked a lot about the art-wise aspect of the band. We all think that it's important to have homogeneous artwork and we decided on a simple and direct approach. People are supposed to see that it's a Regulations record. Most punk and hardcore record covers these days are black and white with some skulls or a horror picture or something like that and we really wanted to do something else. Robert is the art guy in the band and comes up with many of the ideas for the artwork. Most of the stuff is made for real and put together on my computer.

Todd: My perception of Sweden—I've only been once, for a very short time—was that is was, generally “nicer.” What are some of the social niceties that Swedes are lucky to have?

Marcus: I never lived anywhere else than in Sweden so I can't really compare it to anything else. But, for me, some of Sweden's social niceties right now are that I get money from the state without working. I've been working for the last couple of years, but quit so we could go on tour.

Todd: I got into punk when I was thirteen and I've been into it ever since. But I don't surround myself with just other punks. I have a very diverse family. My uncle is a nuclear physicist and my brother is in the Army's Special Forces. What conversations do you get into with either family members or people you feel comfortable with about the decisions you've made in your life?

Marcus: I've also been into punk most of my life, but my family has never had any problems with it. Even though most of my political views and life values are different from theirs, we respect each other's.

Todd: Have there been any odd offers for the band or any curious wrinkles in how people get to know about The Regulations? Like, wasn't someone wearing a Regulations shirt in a Strokes video?

Marcus: I saw a poster from the Regulations NYC show in the latest video by the Strokes—which sucks, by the way—but no one is wearing our shirt. I don't know how that happened.

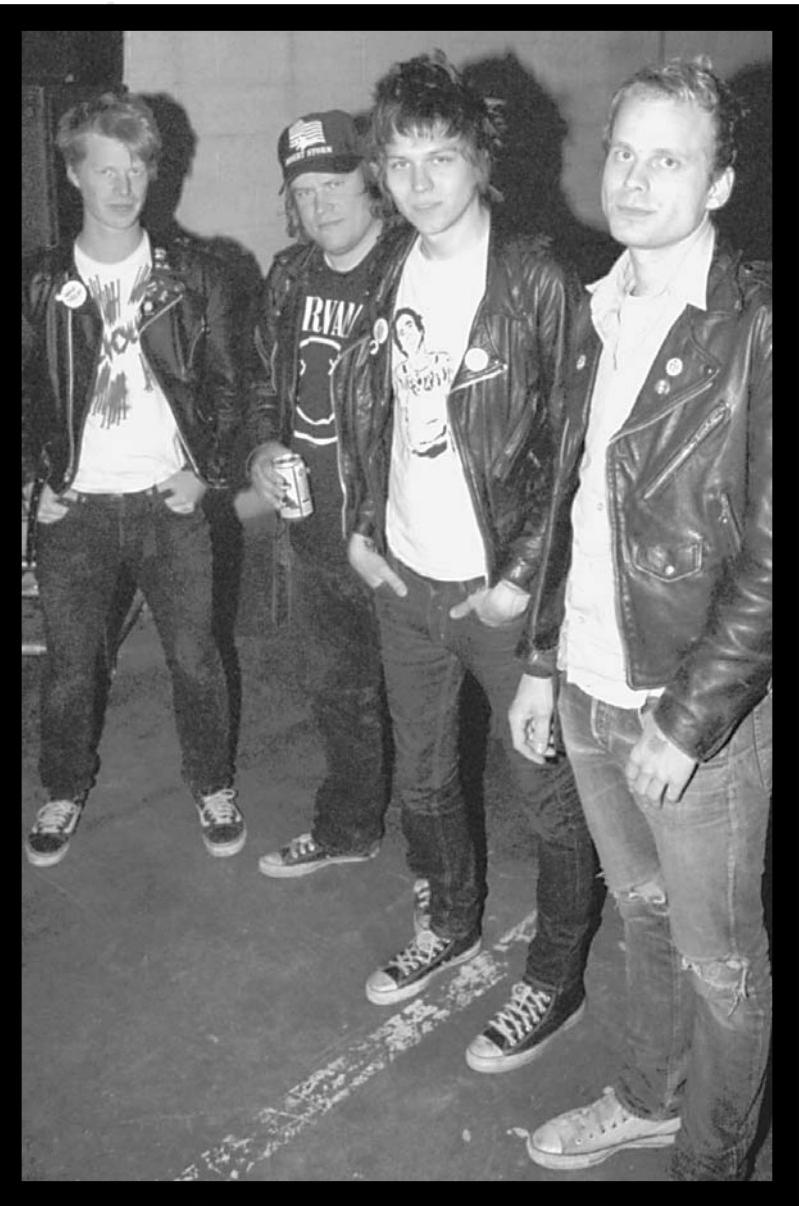
Aphid: If Cadillac approached you with a suitcase full of money and asked to use a Regulations song in a commercial, would you do it?

Marcus: That depends. We've had some strange offers, like when Nokia cell phones mailed us and wanted to use “Anna's Eyes” as a phone signal. We've also had offers from a bigger record label that we've turned down.

Todd: A lot of people will give American punk and hardcore bands a hard time if they come from affluent neighborhoods, but don't realize that bands like Black Flag, Born Against, and Bad Religion all had members who were extremely well off—or their parents were and helped out those bands. Do you come from pretty comfortable backgrounds?

Marcus: We've had lots of help from our friends who've helped us recording, set up shows and tours, and stuff like that. We also helped ourselves as a band by putting some serious time into it: rehearsing, recording and all that. I guess we all kinda have different backgrounds and family situations. Some of us come from broken families and others have more comfortable backgrounds. Some of us are born in the city and others in the countryside. I don't know how much this shows in our music, and it's not like anyone of us are living off our parents nowadays. We've earned money to buy our equipment by breaking bones, having shitty jobs, going to school, and playing shows. We've actually bought a complete backline with money we've earned by selling shirts, records, and touring.

Todd: What are some non-music, non-graphic influences on your approach to music?



Marcus: Most of our inspiration comes from the world around us and the music we listen to. I like to read, but I wouldn't say that we're big readers.

Todd: What does the band disagree on the most?

Marcus: On a six-week U.S. tour, it's hard not to get into arguments, but it was mostly over small issues like if we were going to eat at Taco Bell or Subway or what songs we're going to play. When we're recording, there are always disagreements when we're mixing. But we've known each other for a long time so we don't get into fights that often. There's not so much dirt to dig up in the Regulations camp.

Todd: Are you excited about the future of the Regulations?

Marcus: Yes, for once the future looks bright. We're going to release *Electric Guitar* in Europe on Ny Våg Records and Cage Match Federation. We're also going on our first European tour in May and we're hopefully going to Canada and back to the States, as well, this fall.

Todd: When's the last time all of the Regulations were fuckin' stoked as a group? **Marcus:** It must have been during or after one of the many great shows we did during our U.S. tour. Some of the shows were unbelievable: NYC, Boston, Richmond, Portland, SF, Long Beach and so on. One other thing that came as a surprise is that our self-titled LP is nominated as the best punk/hardrock album of 2005 in an independent Grammy awards here in Sweden.



HELLBILLYS

INTERVIEW AND PHOTOS
BY JESSICA THIRINGER

In the late '70s, the rockabilly revival gained momentum with artists like Robert Gordon and Ray Campi. The Blasters and the Stray Cats were beginning to perform. On the flipside, the Cramps had perfected their trademark hybrid sound and the U.K.'s Paul Fenech's Southern Boys were transforming as the Raw Deal into their better-known alter egos, the Meteors.

The progression from rockabilly to psychobilly was natural. The road had been traveled before when mid-century country morphed into rockabilly. Bored with the con-

fines and rigidity of the rockabilly scene, mid-'80s punks—who were also inspired by rockabilly—started looking for something they hadn't heard before. Psychobilly, with its trademark thumping stand-up bass, amped-up guitars, and horror-film lyrics, was born. It was rockabilly, sped up and dirty.

While the foreign psychobilly scene was languishing in obscurity in the late '80s and early '90s, American psychobilly was in its infancy, as the genre was unrecognized and nameless to most observers. There were barely a handful of like-minded bands spread throughout the country.

One of the first recognized stateside psycho bands is San Francisco's Hellbillys—formed in 1989—who are still spewing their hallmark, blistering-speed evil sixteen years later. Not only have they influenced most of today's current U.S. psycho crop, they're fiercely popular in Japan, Australia, Mexico, Argentina, Brazil, Canada, Germany, Italy, Greece, Sweden and the U.K. They're as big as the Meteors used to be and the loudest band I've ever seen.

Jessica: What should I call you? Barrie? Hellbarrie? Scary? Pervi? You've gone by many names.

Scary: I've been called Scary since I was a kid. I've always collected horror movie stuff and the name just stuck.

Jessica: Doing your time has obviously paid off. Fifteen plus years and you're now considered one of the earliest true U.S. psycho bands. What other U.S. bands did you consider your contemporaries, psycho or otherwise? Deadbolt?

Scary: Actually, I had never heard of, or saw, Deadbolt before 1993. Or, they hadn't come up to San Francisco yet. The Quakes were together and had broken up by then, but the Reverend Horton Heat was playing around when we were starting to get going. Big Sandy, for sure. Bea Pickles and Elmer Shotgun.

Jessica: Is San Francisco supportive of the band?



Scary: Yeah, I guess San Francisco has been supportive. But it seems L.A. is a lot more supportive these days.

Jessica: How?

Scary: It's always been a hotbed of all sorts. There's always been a psycho scene in L.A. and S.F., microscopically. San Francisco is a microcosm of hipsters who started moving on to something else. In L.A., there are more kids who started running with it and there's much more exposure. In San Francisco, there weren't enough bands to keep the interest going. We started playing more in L.A. and we were the first psycho band a lot of people—like the Dragstrip Demons—had heard.

Jessica: Why were you attracted to rockabilly?

Scary: It had a different and extreme look before it was defined. Now, vintage is played out and lame. Kind of the way punk got regimented. When I first got into rockabilly, everyone had huge hair, the girls dressed like '50s sluts, and people just put a look together based on how they pictured themselves and the music. There wasn't a template to follow. I think the regimentation of rockabilly has a lot to do with *Continental Restyling* (French magazine)—not that it's bad, but it sucked the originality out of it. It's however you interpret rockabilly. Psycho has a lot of room to grow. Let's hope psycho doesn't get regimented. I've always had a huge pomp. People put so much emphasis into looking correct, but back in the punk days you'd put together some kind of non sequitur outfit. Rockabilly used to be the same way. During the '80s, Macy's (department store) even had a line of clothes called "'80s Rocker," inspired by the Stray Cats.

Jessica: When you got together as a band, what was going on in psychobilly?

Scary: When we started, there was no scene, per se. We did have a lot of scooter kids coming to our shows because they were savvy to what was happening in the U.K., and we got a record reviewed in *Scootering* magazine. But in the States, it was a punk or maybe a rockabilly show. The only band that really toured here was the Meteors. They came over in 1984 and a few other times. But the scene did not get poppin' till about four or so years ago. We had a hard time finding our niche. In Europe and the U.K., the scene was going strong and was popular, so we found ourselves playing abroad more than at home. Most people stateside had no idea what psycho was.

Jessica: What was the reaction?

Scary: One of our first shows was at Gilman with Victim's Family and Capital Punishment. When the kids saw us, they were chanting, "Stray Cats," but when they

heard us play their jaws dropped. We played at Slim's in San Francisco, opening for Commander Cody & His Lost Planet Airmen. People hated us. They saw pomps and stand-up and thought we'd be a good fit. Before the label starting doing the booking, I always had to explain that we needed to be booked on a punk bill. It's a sound the regular country and rockabilly scene isn't used to hearing.

Jessica: You all come from wide-ranging backgrounds. What was going on personally that made you make the leap from punk and metal to all-out psycho?

Scary: Well, Rockn' Rick was into punk and then in the early-to-mid-'80s he got into rockabilly. The leap to psycho was not too great for him. Same with me. I was into punk. I sang in Christ On Parade, but loved rockabilly. I moved to Japan for a while and got into it there. I came back and wanted to do a hard-edged 'billy type of band. So, that was it for me. Dan was in Hexx, an ultra-fast speed/death metal band. He started branching out musically and fell into it.

He is a great guitar player and was able to adapt to it easily. Gary was the drummer for the Hi-Fives and Redemption 87. He later played in a rockabilly band, so he was naturally able to fall into the fast, hard psycho sound.

Jessica: Has there ever been a feeling of competition between U.S. bands and your overseas counterparts?

Scary: At first, it wasn't really a competition. By the time psycho got popular here, it was dead in Europe. It started here on its own, which may be why Europe got back on their toes. It became a competition when things were starting to pop here. The Big Rumble (the first and largest psychobilly festival) was already on the decline by the early '90s.

Jessica: When did the Hellbillys play there?

Scary: We played the second, fourth, and seventh Big Rumbles.

Jessica: What do you like most about being overseas?



Scary: The Cramps inspired a lot of people, including overseas bands. Overseas, people get what we're doing. It had a name, it had an audience. Here it's like, "You have pomps, but you play really fast?" Seems like here you have to explain yourself a lot. The places that are the most memorable are the Big Rumbles on the coast of England. During festival weekend, they're called psychobilly towns. There's a meeting hall where the bands play and mini caravans of psychos set up to camp out all over. By the time it's over, you just want to hear some reggae and get all that psychobilly out of your ears. Our most memorable shows in Europe have been playing Wild at Heart in Berlin. Both Plan 9 (side project originally appearing as a Misfits cover band, also now performing original material) and the Hellbillys have played

know. If people are interested, they can investigate www.enslaved.com and www.societysm.com.

Jessica: How has psychobilly changed since the early days?

Scary: Psycho has changed in the fact that it was way more rockabilly based. Now it is more punk influenced. We made our own change from neo-rockabilly to a harder punk/metal sound that people are starting to imitate. We get a lot of people telling us that we influenced them. Mad Sin now has a more metal sound, too. Not saying we influenced them, but who knows.

Jessica: More punk based—does this include the avalanche of new psycho bands who are actually just punk bands with a stand-up bass?

Scary: HorrorPops and Tiger Army are

rabid for it. But I am sure there are batches of scenes that are just as good.

Jessica: I didn't imagine psycho would hit the mainstream like it has, but I'm not altogether surprised. What do you estimate the scene's potential to be?

Scary: I think the scene still has room to grow. But, until it gets co-opted by corporate America, it may seem to stay somewhat underground. I just don't see big business taking it over until there is a cutesy boy band version of psycho that the corporate machine can take and change and spit out to the MTV crowd.

Jessica: I do think rockabilly and psycho have been co-opted to an extent by Hot Topic and the media. There are psycho bands on the Warped Tour (Mad Marge & The Stone Cutters) and there are bands and labels push-

HERE IT'S LIKE, "YOU HAVE POMPS, BUT YOU PLAY REALLY FAST!" SEEMS LIKE HERE YOU HAVE TO EXPLAIN YOURSELF A LOT.
-SCARY

there. German fans are rabid for psycho.

Jessica: How did being in Japan contribute to wanting to play psycho? You certainly have a lot of Japanese record releases.

Scary: When I was living in Tokyo, I had just left Christ On Parade and I was kind of sick of rockabilly. A friend invited me to a rockabilly show and I was blown away by how everybody looked. It was the same sort of vibe you get now, but much earlier. Everyone's dressed in vintage everything. I met the guy from the Falcons and went to see his band a week later. It was fast and heavy and had a cool look. I knew what I wanted to do. The Japanese take everything to the nth degree. They had a big influence on me.

Jessica: How do you support your nocturnal habits? You must all have day jobs. I heard some of you were on-and-off house painters.

Scary: Well, I shoot video for bondage and porn websites and videos, and some painting too. Rockn' Rick paints and fixes basses, Dan does computer work, and Gary does computer networking.

Jessica: How does your line of work affect, influence, or complement your music? Any sites or films our readers may recognize your work in?

Scary: It's stuff I'm interested in and I do add that into my music. That always influenced me. You always write about what you

being pushed by their labels to a more mainstream audience. There could be some young band of fifteen-years-olds that's going to take over. It's either going to break through or it's going to just get a little popular. That's kind of what happened with rockabilly. People are always telling us we're on the cusp. The audiences are getting bigger and it's all working out fine for me.

Jessica: What's been the most surprising evolution for you?

Scary: That we can now play in big venues like the Key Club in Hollywood and that there are festivals where at one time it was impossible.

Jessica: Is there anything the newest crop of psychos is forgetting or has let fall by the wayside?

Scary: I think a lot of kids try to imitate another band instead of developing their own style. There are so many bands wearing make up, a lá Demented Are Go—who were the first in the scene to do so—but I guess that is how they can get their own bands on the way to doing a new style. But I would not say it's disappointing. I'm glad there's a scene at all.

Jessica: Nationally, where do you think the psycho scene is the strongest?

Scary: I would say, hands down, California is the best stronghold of psycho. The fans are

ing CDs at Hot Topic (Concombre Zombi)—and I think those are two of the better new psycho bands out right now.

Scary: The label gets deals to market and sell at places like Hot Topic. It's always only a matter of time. It's neat, but it's almost like they're taking something away. If the scene's going to grow, it's got to go up. Life goes that way.

Jessica: What were your most recent purchases?

Scary: I have been filling the voids of '70s punk and Teddy Boy bands of the late '60s early '70s.

Jessica: With which bands?

Scary: Crazy Caven, Planet Of The Drapes, X-Ray Spex, lots of weird old Ramones songs, Avengers...

Jessica: What do you do in your spare time?

Scary: I shoot bondage video and collect horror movie props.

Jessica: What are some of your most prized props?

Scary: I have a Pumpkinhead bust from one of the first movies. I have an alien head from the first *Alien* movie. My *Walk Among Us* album is signed by Danzig, Jerry, Googy, and Doyle.

Jessica: I'm very excited that there are some really strong newer bands out there now. Who are you watching closely?

Scary: For great new bands, I would say Tabaltix, Battle Of The Ninjamanz, Hellbats,

Give 'Em Hell, and Slanderin: all great bands that put on awesome shows.

Jessica: Are there any bands you are currently fostering?

Scary: I would say Tabaltix. They have a very unique sound. Look out for them.

Jessica: What do you like about them?

Scary: What I like about them is that they play more like late '80s psycho with twangy guitars, like the Deltas and Frenzy. Now, everyone just wants to play fast.

Jessica: You've nurtured several bands that have really taken off: AFI and Tiger Army. How do these relationships come about and why do you decide to get involved?

Scary: AFI got some of their first shows opening for us. Nick 13 used to be at our 924 Gilman shows, too. I think it's great that AFI got big—totally nice guys, to boot. I don't think we nurtured any of them. We were all part of the same East Bay music scene and we all got lumped together on bills. It was fun to go to shows and see punk, psycho, and, say, a surf band all on one bill.

Those were the days.

Jessica: Of your favorite bands, who have you had the luck of playing a show with?

Scary: Misfits was a great show. It was in San Jose and it was packed. I have been friends with Jerry Only for years. He, at one time, asked me to try out for singing for the Misfits before Michale Graves stepped in. I kind of regret not trying out.

Jessica: Why?

Scary: Kind of what happened was Jerry told me about getting back together with Doyle and Googy and he came out to see what kind of interest was brewing. I drove him around San Francisco. He heard our CD and I got a letter later that said he wanted to talk, although they were considering Michale Graves. Jerry told me, "It'd be cool if you want to give this a shot," but I couldn't do it at that time. I think me being in the band would have taken it in another direction. I wrote four songs—lyrics and music—for them, but they weren't used. We performed them under Plan 9 and Hellbillys, and they're some of our best songs. I think they picked Michale because he didn't have any preconceived notions about the legacy of the Misfits. But because of that, he didn't know how to write Misfits-style songs.

Jessica: Live, you're the loudest band ever—hands down. What makes and keeps you such an aural powerhouse?



Scary: We have secret weapons.

Jessica: Will you tell me what a few of them are? Everyone's first comment about the Hellbillys is how freakin' loud you guys are.

Scary: That's why they're secret weapons.

Jessica: You've always preferred a heavier sound and with each album, you add more and more metal to the mix. Is your sound changing direction or are you just continually refining it?

Scary: We have just evolved. I like to have each album a little different from the last.

Jessica: What would be your ultimate album concept?

Scary: I take pride in having a different sound on each record. I like to display our interests and talents. I would like to do more rockabilly stuff. We might put some early '90s and live tracks that haven't been released before. We'd like to do a special boxed set of the three *Blood Trilogy* albums. Pushead would do the cover, maybe print about two hundred, and sell them through the website.

Jessica: How often is Plan 9 active? What about your other side projects, like (Dan's side project) Tombstones?

Scary: Plan 9 keeps growing and growing. We have a CD of original song out and have toured Europe, so it keeps me busy. Tombstones are planning another release and they are actively practicing, too.

Jessica: Sometimes there's a lot of Hellbillys and Plan 9 stuff available on Kazaa. Do you have any opinion on peer-to-peer networks and music file sharing?

Scary: I have no problem with that at all. We have less at stake than say, Metallica. We've played lots of places that were just so poor, like Mexico City. They should be able to download music for free. If I were a kid, I'd do it. I encourage it.

GUILTY HEARTS

Interview by Gabriel Hart
and Ryan Leach • Photos
by Jenny Angelillo and
Luis Mancini • Intro by
Ryan Leach



2002 MARKED A PINNACLE FOR MUSIC IN L.A. as some exciting bands were playing the most vibrant music Angelinos had heard since the mid '80s. Four erudite kids documented the scene in their philanthropic *Let's Get Rid of L.A.* compilation. While *Let's Get Rid of L.A.* ran the gamut musically—from the roots-punk of The Starvations to the power pop of The Pinkz—there was continuity in the mindset of the bands represented. *Let's Get Rid of L.A.* drew from the first *Decline of Western Civilization*. Like an assortment of Otter Pops, each group had a different flavor that was as equally good and addicting as the next. Then as with every rise, there was a fall. By late 2003 at least five of the bands on the compilation had either imploded or were

on shaky ground. In addition, Juvee, which acted as a home base for these diverse bands, closed its doors. It seemed like everything that spawned this boom in creativity faded. Then L.A. felt a resurgence in new bands like The Red Onions and The Guilty Hearts. These bands helped fill the void left by some of L.A.'s recently departed bands. The Guilty Hearts are Leon Catfish (vocals, guitar), Edgar Rodriguez (guitar, vocals) and Hermann Senac (drums, vocals). They're three guys well versed in L.A.'s musical history. Just listen to their songs. The Guilty Hearts draw from some of the best L.A. roots-punk bands of the past, including The Gun Club, Tex And The Horseheads, and The Flesh Eaters. Looking beyond their local musical

history, the guys incorporate some of their favorite Crypt Records bands such as The Oblivians and The Gories, into their swampy hybrid. With influences like these, it's a given The Guilty Hearts are going to have a distinct, timeless sound. And while punk has encouraged a self-destructive, ephemeral ethos—this is where the Situationist connection comes in—it's time to look beyond that. Everything and anything with importance has drawn influence from the best of the past—from Camus pulling from James Cain to El Pollo Loco introducing beach bucket drink cups to compete with 7-11's longstanding Double Gulp. It's about synthesizing the old with the new, and in the case of The Guilty Hearts, the past never sounded so good.



And on another note: Edgar, Leon, and Hermann have gone above and beyond the call of duty. These guys have put together the majority of The Scene shows everyone has enjoyed for the last couple of years. Personally, The Scene has become my home, by exuding a hospitality and roster of bands that keeps me coming back. Currently, there's no place like it in L.A. and Edgar, Leon, and Hermann have largely been responsible for making this otherwise obscure bar the hub of creativity that it is. Thanks, guys.

Ryan: When did The Rippers end and The Guilty Hearts begin?

Edgar: When we opened for The Dirlbombs. That was kind of our swan song, although we didn't know it at the time. I think it was April, but not officially until June.

Gabriel: When was that? 2002?

Edgar: Yeah.

Leon: That's when our drummer got The Rippers logo tattoo.

Ryan: Oh, damn!

Gabriel: What happened?

Leon: Our drummer, Ben, got the knife, which was our logo at the time, tattooed on him.

Edgar: It was a butterfly knife keychain.

Gabriel: Did it say "The Rippers" on it?

Edgar: No.

Ryan: You guys didn't kick him out, did you?

Edgar: No. We had all talked about doing it as a band to mark the time we spent together. It sounded like a good idea at the time. All of a sudden, he walked into practice one day and was like, "Hey guys, check it out!" We looked at each other—we had already started writing songs for the new band. [laughter] And we just went, "Yeah dude, pretty cool!" I think we had even said, "All right, at this practice we're going to tell them." And then he walked in with the tattoo and we couldn't tell them. But we started writing songs with our friend Kevin. And it just felt like hooking up with a really hot girl when you have a really shitty girlfriend who you're trying to break up with.

Ryan: Like a holding pattern?

Edgar: Yeah. I felt really guilty about the whole sneaking-around thing.

Gabriel: What was the problem for you guys?

Edgar: From the get-go we had a vision of a different sound for the band.

Leon: Like our drummer, who didn't own one record by a black musician.

Edgar: Yeah, he wasn't really into black music like we were. I think he was into Prince and more modern things like Sir Mix A Lot.

Leon: He's the greatest guy, but it makes a difference when you can't really talk about music that way and it was the same for the singer.

Edgar: Yeah, he listened to nothing but classic rock like Foghat and Bad Company.

Leon: He had a great voice.

Edgar: We were so desperate to put something together. We found our drummer at the time through a *Recycler* ad that said: "Devil Dogs, New Bomb Turks, Manic Street Preachers, shoe gaze." I think he was looking for either one. He dug The Guilty Hearts. I guess he was playing in a reggae band before he found us.

Ryan: Oh! That's desperate.

Edgar: Desperate. But we were desperate, too. We kind of said, "All right, we're gonna make this work." And it never fully materialized with what we heard in our heads. And that was the reason why we just decided to cut our losses. I was ready to quit completely.

Leon: Remember that time when we were in the studio, we were recording stuff, John didn't show up to practice, and I ended up singing the song?

Edgar: Yeah, I remember forcing you to sing.

Ryan: And that was your first time singing?

Leon: Pretty much. I had done some home recordings that no one had heard.

Edgar: We realized that less is more. At the time, I was playing bass. We had always been really big fans of The Oblivians, The Cheater Slicks, and The Gories. We just said, "If that's the sound we're going for then we need to follow their formula." I put down the bass and picked up the guitar and we just started writing. **Leon:** That's when Hermann wasn't even a twinkle in our eyes.

Edgar: Then we hooked up with this guy, Cameron, in the Valley. He was awesome. Not the greatest drummer, per se, in terms of skill, but he made up for it in attitude.

Hermann: He has a great band.

Edgar: Yeah, the Tumors, if they're still out there. Then he developed "tendonitis" in his elbow. He said, "Hey, I just can't do it anymore."

Leon: Close to our first show.

Edgar: Yeah, the moment I told him we booked our first show, it happened.

Leon: It was a struggle finding a drummer.

Hermann: He wasn't even into playing live anyway.

Leon: He told us he wanted to play one show every three months.

Edgar: And we were like, "Yeah, no." Then we started auditioning other drummers.

Hermann: Weren't you auditioning, like, heavy metal drummers? You had to take drums away from them. [laughter]

Ryan: You had the Neil Peart guys coming in.

Edgar: Yeah, they'd come in with six toms. One guy was really close, but he was way too busy. We stripped him down to a bass drum, a snare, and a hi-hat. He came close. So one night I was crying in my beer at the Anarchy

Library saying, "Why the fuck isn't anyone into this? This is great shit, but no one was into it."

Gabriel: That's what was so frustrating. I remember when I first met you guys in early 2003 and by that time, that whole cool Juvee time was happening where all those great bands were there. That was the place to be... **Leon:** We were trying.

Gabriel: I know. But my point is that by 2004, there was a lull. I remember when The Scene first started having shows, everyone was like, "Fuck, another show at The Scene." I think the reason that whole rad time broke apart was because Juvee broke up. There was no longer a central meeting place where you knew everyone was gonna be there and all the rad bands were gonna play. You guys made The Scene go from a crappy, lowest common denominator place to the "it" place. How did that whole transition take place?

Edgar: Necessity and trying to get more shows together. We started going into places and saying, "Hey, can you give us a whole night?" Our experience was we were getting booked with really shitty bands that didn't have a common interest with us. We did it at the Ramada, which was weird.

Gabriel: I loved those shows.

Edgar: We did several cool shows there. Most nights, if we got twenty people in the door it was, "All right, cool!" We started getting hassled: "Oh, you can't have this night. You can't have that night. I've got some jazz club or some mod club." So, as a last ditch effort me and Leon went out to North Hollywood. We did a night with The Lamps, The Cuts, and The Ponys.

Hermann: And that was at the Thunderbird.

Edgar: Yeah. We went to Pete Cain, who was an old friend of mine, and I said, "Cain, I don't know if you can help me. I've got this show on Saturday." And he said, "This Saturday?" And I said, "Yeah." He said, "That's awesome. The show I had for Saturday just fell apart this afternoon. I've been calling everybody trying to book a show this Saturday. You have the night." And it went so well he said, "Anytime you want a night, you let me know, it's yours." And then the Thunderbird got sold. And that was that.

Gabriel: That was another thing; it's always like pulling teeth to get people to go the Valley, but you actually got people to go out there. I thought that was pretty cool.

Edgar: Yeah, there were several times that we had about a hundred people. And then The Scene, that was just born out of necessity.

Hermann: I thought The Scene was a cool club. I liked the ambiance.

Ryan: Tell me how you found Hermann. You guys didn't even know his track record, right?

Edgar: Yeah, I had no clue.

Leon: We would walk in and they would have four tequila shots waiting for us...

Edgar: Before we got to the bar, I was talking to our friend Preston, who's a regular, and I was saying, "We can't find a drummer. No one is digging this shit." And he said, "I know a drummer. What about Hermann?" And I said, "Who's Hermann?" And he said, "He's in The Groovy Rednecks."

Leon: And I said, "Oh fuck, we've seen him. He's the guy who looks like he's about to fall asleep." [laughter]

Hermann: Well, I played with the Rednecks for eleven years. Those guys were my buddies, but after awhile I got really bored of playing. It really wasn't my cup of tea. I just

Edgar: Smoked joints with...

Hermann: Smoked crank with. [laughter]

Ryan: How long had you been playing with Hermann before you released your first full-length?

Hermann: A month or two months.

Ryan: That record took a long time to come out.

Edgar: Yeah, I think we met Beat (owner of Voodoo Rhythm Records) at the Big Foot Lodge.

Hermann: Yeah, the whole Big Foot thing. I told them: "Hey, give that tape to that Beat-Man guy." I had to split—I had to go to work. So they gave the tape to him. He contacted us about a month later.

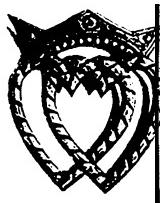
Edgar: We still put everything we had out there but I don't think they had the quality of some of the other shows.

Hermann: The Hamburg show was good.

Edgar: I really liked the Serbian shows. Those were really good.

Hermann: Yeah. A lot of people showed up to those.

Edgar: Just driving through Belgrade and looking at the bombed-out buildings. The club promoter was in the taxi smoking a big fatty saying, "Yeah, my childhood friend who was a fireman lost his legs when the first tomahawk hit." And you're just like, "Okay, we're playing here." But it was awesome. Any sort of doubt or fears were squashed.



We got an email saying, "Your band destroys my brain. It squeezes the shit out of my asshole." And Beat-Man said, "Let's do a record." — Edgar

did it to do something. I couldn't find any bands to play with. Who wants to play with an old, has-been drummer?

Edgar: I called Hermann the next day after I got his phone number from Preston. We were so frustrated—I had taken this stance where I'd fire off these lines of questions, so before we even sit down and check what this guy's chops are like, I want to see where this guy is coming from. So I started: "How long have you been playing?" And Hermann said, "Years and years." I said, "More than ten?" And he said, "Yes." And I said, "Okay. So besides Groovy Rednecks, what else have you done?" And Hermann said, "Oh, I was in this band called Blood On The Saddle." And I almost dropped the phone. [laughter] That's awesome! I saw a later version of Blood On The Saddle without Hermann and I was a fan. Just after talking to Hermann, you start to realize he was in Loafin' Hyenas, Crowbar Salvation, and countless bands with amazing musicians. And then we heard him play. I dropped off our demo at his house and then we got together and *bang* there it is.

Gabriel: Did Hermann play on that first three-song demo you guys did?

Leon: No.

Hermann: When I first heard the demo, I thought, "Wow! This is pretty cool stuff—in the vein of The Oblivians—but a little more swampy sounding. Wow! I've been playing that kinda shit for years."

Leon: Then we started talking to him and got to know him and who he had played with...

Edgar: And met with...

Leon: Made out with...

Edgar: Yeah, I think Leon walked up to Beat-Man while he was in the alleyway behind the Big Foot Lodge in his tighty whiteys.

Leon: He was changing before the set and I handed the tape to him.

Edgar: And then a month later we got an email saying, "Your band destroys my brain. It squeezes the shit out of my asshole." And he said, "Let's do a record." From that point, it took a year. We handed over the album last January.

Hermann: Then they had to do all the artwork.

Ryan: Who did the artwork? It's really good.

Leon: Beat-Man used all our artwork.

Edgar: Except the picture of the kid holding up the Iron Maiden banner on the back of the LP.

Hermann: Give me some "wather."

Edgar: He misspelled "water."

Ryan: Yeah, there are misspellings on the Voodoo Rhythm compilation you're on. There's some really fundamental words spelled wrong.

Hermann: That's Beat-Man's style.

Edgar: We've had that conversation with other people, too.

Ryan: It's primitive music with primitive spelling.

Hermann: He's the nicest guy. It's funny, when we played in Holland, Beat-Man was in the audience and my wife was telling me that he was all smiles going, "Those are my boys!"

Ryan: How many shows did you do in Europe?

Edgar: I think we did twenty-two.

Hermann: The first few were a blur because we were jet-lagged. We were on autopilot.

Ryan: Didn't some Germans ask you to sign their Blood On The Saddle records, Hermann?

Hermann: Yeah, Germany and also in Serbia. Some guy came up with the first Blood On The Saddle album and I said, "How the hell did you get that?" And he said he bought it there in Serbia. He said [imitating Serbian accent], "I love rockabilly!" He was all jazzed and I was pretty stoked that he had the record. Actually, he had both of them—the first one and the second one. He had one on SST. I'm like, "Where did you get that?"

Edgar: [imitating Serbian accent] EBAY!

Gabriel: It's a common thing for people in Europe to respond to stuff that's Americana. They embrace it quicker than Americans do.

Ryan: Hermann tell me about the herb story.

Hermann: This guy in Switzerland gave me a piece of hash and I had forgotten all about it. It was a tiny, little piece. So we get to the border and our road manager said, "Hey, man, if you guys have anything on you, toss it out or do something with it. Just don't keep it in the van." So we get to the border and I thought, "You know what? I'll just eat it." And it's the hardest thing to eat, man.

Gabriel: You were chewing on it?

Hermann: Yeah, I was chewing on it. I had all this hash on my teeth. [laughter]

Gabriel: It's like eating a stick of butter.

Hermann: Yeah, exactly. So we get to the border and right away I'm like, "Ahhhhh...they can't smell it." So, as soon as the guy walked in, he smelled it right away—as soon as I opened my mouth.



Edgar: And Hermann broke rule number one of border crossing: keep your passport in your pocket!

Hermann: Yeah, I was a knuckle head. I left it in my backpack in the back. So we had to pull over and a little Italian cop was searching for the hash. He said he was going to take me in, handcuff me, and pump my stomach. And I said, "Hey man, the hash was smaller than an M&M." After a while of hassling me, he just gave up. They got the dogs out and sniffed the whole car and didn't find anything. Then he took out my wallet and I saw him snake ten Euros and I guess that was the bribe right there and he put it in his pocket.

Ryan: He also asked you to sign his Blood On The Saddle record. [laughter]

Hermann: No, but on the way to Italy I started getting the raddest buzz.

Gabriel: L.A. is different from other metropolitan cities like San Francisco and Seattle. San Francisco and Seattle claim to be really politically correct with demonstrations, but on a day-to-day basis they do not really seem to back it up like L.A. does—they still have to think about it and we don't.

Edgar: I think on that level, we don't have that. L.A. is progressive and we're tolerant. We embrace diversity. I've never encountered that problem in Seattle or San Francisco.

Gabriel: I think it was Jorge, the Red Onions' drummer, (The Red Onions, like The Guilty Hearts, are an all-Latino band) who brought something like that up. In San Francisco, someone said, "Oh, here come the Mexicans!" which could have been innocent or idiotic.

Edgar: It's funny that you should bring that up because I was reading a review of the split single we did with This Damn Town and the reviewer went into the overall sound and content of This Damn Town, but when he got to us, he said, "They're brown, look like Los Lobos with shades, and they're okay." He didn't talk too much about the music.

Ryan: In that vein, were you guys influenced by Mexican-American artists of the past? I know Jeffrey Lee Pierce felt camaraderie with Tito Larriva.

Edgar: For me, I don't think Los Lobos influence my music, but I think they empowered me as a Mexican-American—that there is success to be had and that it should be on

your own terms. They worked really hard to get where they're at. I've seen them play four or five times. I love The Plugs.

Leon: The Zeros.

Ryan: Yeah, The Zeros are bad ass! Thee Midniters, too.

Hermann: Thee Midniters are one of the first bands I saw when I was a kid. I saw them on a flatbed truck in front of a store in South Central.

Ryan: "Whittier Boulevard!"

Hermann: Yeah, I was like seven years old. I saw them play with The Safaris.

Ryan: What do you guys have in store for the future?

Hermann: A tuba player!

Edgar: We got a record coming out soon. We're still giving birth to it. It's starting to drop into the birth canal. We haven't seen the head yet. The goal is to record as many songs as possible. Go back to Beat. See if he's interested in doing another one. Also talk to other labels that have expressed some interest, and hit the road this year.

theguiltyhearts@hotmail.com



THE EIGHTH ANNUAL



PUNK ROCK BOWLING TOURNAMENT

BY DENISE ORTON
PHOTOS BY
CHRISTOPHER BAXTER

MORALE COULD NOT HAVE BEEN HIGHER

Looking back, my mind likes to lump Punk Rock Bowling all together into one short montage. Like the ones they have in all of those movies where the main character is being trained to fight or to become a geisha or is getting a makeover. They are always set to some bitchin' tune, and the montage in my mind is no different. For some reason, Ronnie James Dio's masterpiece "Holy Diver" always comes to mind as my mishmash's soundtrack. Probably because it has that long intro and such tension builds before the simple, fascinating lyrics fill the mind with rhetorical questions. The wicked guitar work fills the stomach with pterodactyls, then at the end, one feels absolutely vindicated for allowing themselves all of that delicious anticipation. Yes, it was a lot like that.

It was a cool, calm Friday night in Las Vegas and the cloudless sky was washed lavender by billions of dazzling little lights. Ten of us arrived at the airport at once, opened some beers, and hopped into a limo bound for Sam's Town. Tiltwheel's Paul Trash and I decided to put in some tunes and everyone

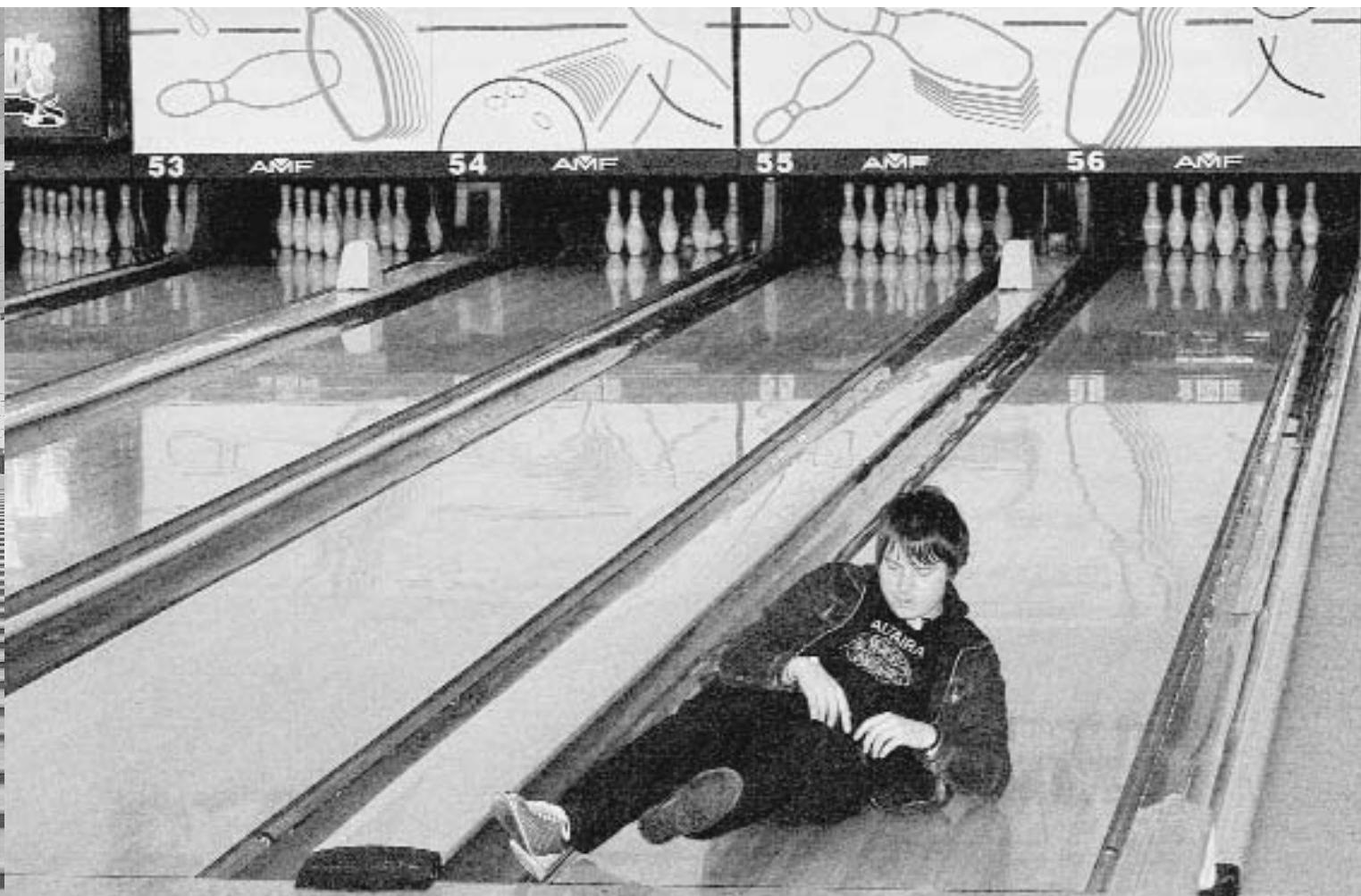
sang along to Jawbreaker and Leatherface. I shared my Vitamin Water and Stolichnaya with my new San Diegoan friend Angie, while my old San Diegoan friend Tampa J drank his Pabst with determination, ignoring his dwindling motor skills. International Mingler Josh Mosh was still coherent and Razorcaker Gabe Rock's eyes glistened with tomfoolery above his molesterstache. Morale could not have been higher and I do not think we hit a single red light. The mother ship was pulling us in, and in no time we had arrived.

Paul, Katherine (the only Milwaukeean in the limo), and I hurried next door to Nevada Palace to get situated before finding the rest of our friends. En route, we encountered a few familiar faces, including Davey Tiltwheel and Annie Metal. Someone mentioned that they had gotten married earlier in the day. That was a real stunner, because they told everyone at the Fest that they would be getting married on June 6, 2006 (6/6/6). I loudly uttered a few choice expletives before they said that they would be having a ceremony for the friends on Saturday. The placation was complete and the walk resumed.

Until that point, most of what I had seen of Vegas was The Strip. One can only imagine the glee and relief I felt upon entering Nevada Palace. There was no elaborate architecture, nor were there mascots or Celine Dion posters. It was smoky, tacky, and loud. The ambience of the establishment can be equated to the moment when that bald uncle whom everyone knows is bald finally stops wearing his stupid toupee. It was a place in the desert to gamble and drink and sleep. Period. No bullshit.

My roomies for the weekend, Razorcakers Todd Taylor and Chris Devlin, were in when I arrived to drop my suitcase. I added my Stoli to the bar, which was technically a dresser, where two bottles of whiskey, a bottle of rum, and a lot of ginger beer already resided. I topped off my flask while more people congregated. It was approaching midnight, so we headed back to Sam's Town. The instant that we arrived, I lost twenty dollars at blackjack with Chris Devlin as my guide. An eighties cover band was playing, which is a venture I will forever support, but word was that people were gathered at another bar.

Another bar, indeed. It took a minute for the spots to dissipate as my eyes adjusted to



SAN DIEGO RECEIVED A BOX CONTAINING AN EMPTY ENVELOPE AND GAY FORN FOR BOWLING THE SHITTEST, WHILE OTHER PEOPLE GOT REAL PRIZES FOR TRYING AND ACHIEVING.

the soft lighting. I found myself in an enormous atrium in the center of Sam's Town, surrounded by trees, flowers, and benches. Small, partially hidden speakers emitted sounds of nature. Directly ahead of me, a large stone plateau topped with fake deer emitted sounds of inebriation. The plateau was, in fact, the bar, and it was packed to the gills. Across from the bar stood a three-story waterfall that featured disturbingly realistic animatronics.

The details of that night are hazy. There was a lot of hugging and chanting. Shots were taken. Jagermeister whenever I saw Davey. Whiskey with my festing comrade and English rose, Gemma. The life-like bear next to the waterfall growled every hour and the mob erupted, cheering and raising their glasses high. Todd, Chris, and I continued drinking back at Nevada Palace on the casino floor and up in the room with a few of my favorite Gainesvillians. I helped Chris drink significant quantities of his molasses-flavored rum before starting in on some whiskey and ginger beer combo. I slipped into the bathroom, thinking that the mixture may have been a bad choice. The bathroom door opened abruptly behind me, and a wide-eyed Katie Kirkpatrick stuck

her head in, "So, you pukin'?" That was all of the encouragement I needed, and seconds later my bad choice stared back up at me from the toilet. It was not long after returning to the group that it was unanimously decided that we had to call it a night.

IF MARDI GRAS WERE A LITTLE MORE SCANDALOUS AND A LOT MORE AWESOME

Saturday, Chris, Todd, and I all awoke at nine AM obnoxiously alert and achy. There was no reason in the universe for the three of us to be awake at such an ungodly hour. After nursing our hangovers and expelling our demons, we walked back to Sam's for breakfast. On our way in, we found Josh Mosh and Tampa J still awake, wandering aimlessly, but together, near the guest services desk. Their eyes were glazed thickly and they each clung tightly to a fresh beer. Our presence burst whatever bubble they had been floating in, however, because it was not long before Josh hightailed it to sleep and J joined us for a mediocre breakfast.

After eating, I spent five hours losing a hundred dollars to a bunch of old people in the poker room. On the bright side, I got seven

free beers out of the deal. On the dark side, I drank seven fourteen-dollar beers. Either way, when it was all over, it was time to head back to the waterfall, which had become the main rendezvous point for the weekend.

It was then when I realized how many people I must have met the night before, because I recognized a lot of faces, and they recognized me. The vast majority of my new acquaintances were from San Diego, and nearly all of the males were sporting mustaches in honor of Mustache Month. This was a godsend, really. After all, when the human brain is reduced to drunken-autopilot-survival-mode, it is easy even then to remember the following equation: mustache + stupid outfit = friend. The ladies were a bit easier to remember by name, because the male to female ratio was like 3:1.

This was also when I realized how unprepared and naïve the hotel had been in anticipating our particular group. They were selling buckets of Miller High Life, four bottles for five dollars. Pretty rad, but after the beers were drank, what happened to the buckets? Sure, maybe half were returned to the bar, but the other half became protective helmets and gar-



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gantuan chalices containing unholy mixtures which were drank by the most daring and intoxicated individuals.

At six PM, the group shifted down to the lower level for bowling. A few left a bit earlier to change into their costumes. I am not a person who is accustomed to bowling at that high a level, but, apparently, costumes are a huge part of a successful game. Something about the extra fabric aiding in the aerodynamics. I did not catch the whole explanation, which was fine, because I did not go to Las Vegas as a bowler. I went as an ardent supporter of teams Razorkake and Tiltwheel. Razorkake had four teams. One spent significant time practicing, and they were placed on a middle lane. Another Razorkake team, as well as Team Tiltwheel, were literally put in the corner, banished to farthest two lanes. While it seems that it was the intent of the tournament coordinators to keep us as far out of the way as possible, we were right next to the bathrooms, so everyone had to pass us at least once.

Our corner looked like Mardi Gras, if Mardi Gras were a little more scandalous and a lot more awesome. We had Davey Tiltwheel dressed as a banana, Paul Trash dressed as a bride of Christ, *Fast Times* publisher Ken Swagger as Santa Claus, Ali in a rabbit suit carrying around a trombone and a breathalyzer, Gabe Rock in a tank top with leopard man panties and a dinosaur foot, in addition to the multitude of manly half-shirts and other such perversions that strutted about.

As far as the actual bowling went, while their methods were unorthodox, I cannot say that they were at all successful in the scoring aspect. They were successful, however, in the humor aspect, which is indisputably

more important. Every conceivable approach was attempted, including, but not limited to, between the legs, overhand, overhand from several lanes away, the gentle tap, the bounce off the ball already stuck in the gutter, and even the exquisitely hazardous human pyramid.

Though nobody was injured in the human pyramid, our crew did not escape the alley unscathed. Ali fell down in the approach area, hit his head, and got a little concussed. Davey also fell, cracking his ribs for at least the fiftieth time since I have known him.

While checking our blood-alcohol content with Ali's breathalyzer, confirming that we were in no shape to operate heavy machinery, Davey told me that the wedding would be happening after bowling. It would occur at the conclusion of the ten PM laser show at the waterfall. He also asked me to be co-best-woman. I happily agreed, and we headed upstairs to do a celebratory shot.

The laser show started shortly after we got to the bar. It occurred three times a day, but that was the first time that I had witnessed its full glory. A medley of patriotic songs blared from the speakers, while coordinated laser rockets and flags and shit danced against the roaring waterfall. Beautifully blended into the show were the animatronic bear, eagle, and, most humorously, the wolf, which howled dramatically at the end. The crowd hit the roof, chanting, "USA! USA!" and then melted seamlessly into, "LASERS! AND WATER! AND LASERS! AND WATER!" The screaming continued until every last person lost their voice or stopped to slam their drink.

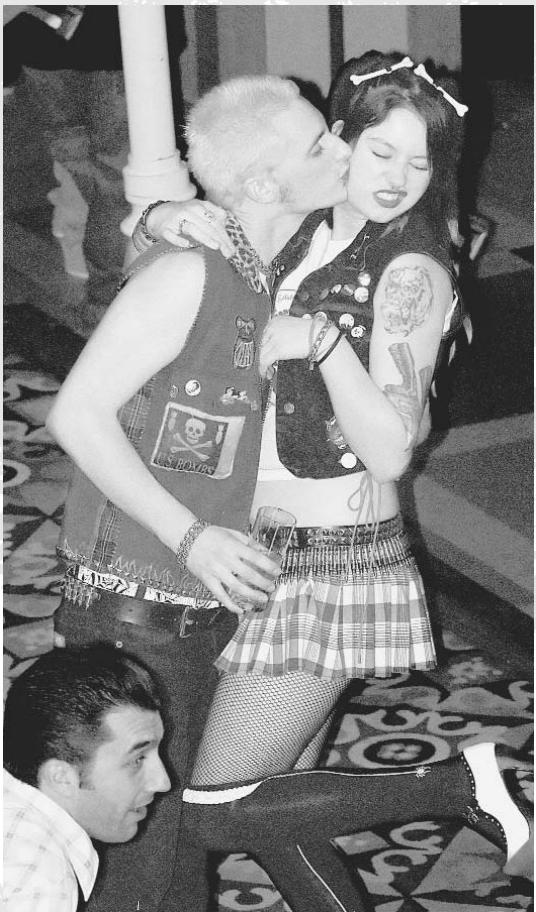
The wedding happened next. Chris Devlin, the flower-man, in his Spiderman half-shirt

walked down the "aisle" first, and joined Andina, Annie's cousin and maid of honor, and myself, who stood with the officiators, Santa Claus, and a very turquoise-haired San Franciscan named Floyd. A red handlebar mustache in a white tracksuit named Travis Brady gave Annie away, and the banana that she was about to marry was escorted by Razorkaker Megan Pants. The crowd provided the wedding march just as the cavemen certainly did: with their voices. The ceremony was fast, and before I knew it, I was doing another shot of Jagermeister with the happy couple.

Everyone headed back to Nevada Palace for the significantly cheaper drinks and gambling. I was heavily intoxicated and felt like blowing some money at an unfamiliar game, so I took the empty seat between Paul Trash and Gabe Rock at the two dollar roulette table and developed a new mania. Over the next few hours, Paul and I remained stationary at the end of the table, while the rest of the seats experienced a steady turnover of our friends. Finally around six, I could no longer see straight or count properly, so I had one more drink and headed up to bed.

A MESMERIZING, HAIRY BURLESQUE

Sunday around eleven AM, I walked over to Sam's Town and had a beer with a group of San Diego gentlemen before going to the buffet and taking the shuttle to The Strip with Gemma. She was visiting Las Vegas for the first time and wanted to see what all of the hype was about. We spent a few hours wandering around Caesar's Palace, New York Las



DENISE
IN

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Vegas, and The Bellagio drinking grossly overpriced drinks as our senses were accosted by mobs of tourists, traffic, and advertisements. By the time we boarded the five PM shuttle back, we were ready to return to our laid-back, out-of-the-way casinos full of equal parts friends and local senior citizens.

The waterfall area was in upheaval when we returned. San Diegans Russell and Snakey were in the process of being interrogated by security because of their adamant belief throughout the day that the bear needed to wear a hat. In order to get the cowboy and trucker hats on the bear, it was necessary to climb over a partition, around some trees, and up a treacherous rock face. Clearly, the hotel staff did not understand this, because they revoked the god-given drinking rights of those brave men. When a security guard took the hat off of the bear for the last time, he was assaulted with a barrage of boos and hisses from the empathetic onlookers.

A few hours later, everyone descended upon Sam's Town Live for the awards ceremony. The room was big, the lights were low, and three bars were set up to gouge us at our convenience with marked up drink prices.

Kids were dressed to the nines, many wearing clean shirts. San Diego received a box containing an empty envelope and gay porn for bowling the shittiest, while other people got real prizes for trying and achieving. Epitaph won and San Diego booed loudly from the front.

After the awards, there was a burlesque show featuring hottie chicks in slutty lingerie. San Diego started chanting over the music and merged into the center of the crowd. A break dance circle formed and quickly developed into a shirts-off dance ring. More and more shirtless men entered the circle and performed a mesmerizing, hairy burlesque of their own, which would later come to be affectionately called "the burlesque." People got on shoulders and backs, thrashing about, forming kick lines, providing a strikingly unchoreographed contrast to the legitimate performers onstage. When the hysteria died down, Topless Performer Josh Brady and I did some shots and a band playing an array of punk rock covers took the stage.

Back to Nevada Palace we all went and gambling was on in full force. Travis Dukes [of Hillsborough], San Diegan Ken Prefect, and I started out at the dollar blackjack table. I really hate blackjack, because I suck at it, but I made twenty bucks last for at least three rounds of the cocktail waitress. When that money was gone, I joined Sean Tim Version, Paul Trash, and Gabe Rock at the roulette table, and the next thing I knew it was four o'clock and Tampa kids were wheeling their luggage by, bound for the airport.

I rejected the fact that it was Monday already and continued to drink and gamble for another hour, before switching my main focus to being social. By this time, most of our friends had retired. Sean Brady (brother of the previously discussed Josh and Travis) reappeared, telling us that he had been at the hospital all night because Jacek (whom I had known mostly as the guy with the mullet wig and sunglasses) had broken his wrist doing the "running man" at the awards show. So he, Josh, Ken, and I drank to that. It was almost seven when my brain finally told me that if I did not go to bed right then, it would implode on me and I would drop dead in the middle of the casino and degenerate Las Vegas gamblers would steal my purse and commit unspeakable acts of identity fraud. So I bid my companions adieu, and made it back to the room within my brain's timeframe.

HALF-AWAKE AND HALF-ALIVE

A few hours later, it was noon and Nevada Palace check-out time. After saying goodbye to Todd and Chris, I wheeled my suitcase over to Davey and Annie's room to find everybody still in bed, half-aware and half-alive. Shirtless, mustached men milled in and out. Even with the door wide open, the room was dark and a pungent mixture of body odor and alcohol hung in the air. Russell was drinking whiskey and water. Josh had gone to bed at ten and was breathing, which was the best that anyone could have hoped for.

I was dehydrated and felt pain radiate from at least six places. However, Davey was my ride to the airport and my flight home was not until much later, so I leaned against the railing outside of the room, squinted out the unforgiving sun, and thought about the conversation that he and I had right after the wedding two nights before. His ribs had been hurting him and my foot had a blister from my heels, so we sat on a bench apart from the group and had a long, overdue talk. We started by talking about our friendship and its depth and all of that cheesy "I love you, man" shit that people talk about when they are drunk and happy. After a dozen people stopped by to congratulate him, the conversation turned to everyone else, drinking and laughing together only a few yards away.

Davey smiled at me and laid out a rather profound piece of drunken wisdom, "You know, Denise, this is our family. This shit's forever. We're stuck with these people for the rest of our lives and it's perfect, because we chose each other."

His words really hit me, because I knew that they were true. We talked about how much love we have for our friends, and how it does not matter what happens because it is an energy, like anything. It does not end. It just goes someplace else, and sometimes it comes back our way. We probably sounded like a couple of hippie fucks trying to wax philosophical while expanding our consciousness, but who cares? Maybe we were for that moment in time. One thing is for sure, though. A drunk chick and a drunker banana sitting on a bench, tearing up, talking about love must have been quite a sight.

My head throbbed in a familiar rhythm as my smile muscles reacted to the memory, so I turned away from the sun and walked back into the dark room. After all, misery loves company and it is not every day that I get to be miserable with my family.



TOP FIVES

RAZORCAKE STAFF

- Amy Adoyzie**
Why I'm Totally Crushin' on Greg Cartwright or Top Five Reigning Sound Songs of the Moment
- "If You Can't Give Me Everything"
 - "Funny Thing"
 - "I'll Cry"
 - "If Christmas Can't Bring You Home"
 - "I'm So Thankful"

- Aphid Peewit**
- The Reatards, *Not Fucked Enough*
 - The Pricks, *Maximum S&M*
 - Poison Idea, *Pick Your King*
 - No Trend, *Teen Love*
 - *One Hand Jerking* by Paul Krassner (book)

- Ben Snakepit**
- The Ergs!, *Jersey's Best Prancers* 12"
 - Pedestrians, *Future Shock*
 - Pink Eye 7"
 - Signal Lost,
 - *You'll Never Get Us Down Again* 7"
 - Paul Wall, *The People's Champ* (Chopped and Screwed version)

- Bradley Williams**
- San Pedro
 - Riding bikes along the Pacific Coast
 - The kid next door to 13th St. with lyrics like "no money no bunny" and "limousines are long, Cadillacs are blue."
 - Mutha fuckin' Chris Kohler (drummer for Sexy)
 - Drinker's Purgatory

- Brian Mosher**
- The Konks, self-titled
 - The Radio Knives, *Cursed*
 - Rocket, *Girls with Candy Hearts*
 - The Turpentine Brothers, *We Don't Care About Your Good Times*
 - The Briefs, *Steal Yer Heart*

- Buttertooth**
- *Everything You Know Is Wrong: The Disinformation guide to Secrets and Lies* (book)
 - Tera Melos, self-titled
 - *The Discoverers* by Daniel J. Boorstein
 - Laika and the Cosmonauts, *Music from Beyond Tomorrow*
 - Mercyful Fate, *The Beginning*

Chris Devlin

Top Five Razorcake Motivational Slogans

- What are you, fuckin' stupid?
- No, we can't get you a grant for "hookers and blow."
- Next person who touches my stapler will be sodomized.
- Could you just shut the fuck up for five seconds?
- You're always welcome at the Razorcake penthouse.

Designated Dale

- Throw Rag and The Riverboat Gamblers at Alex's Bar in Long Beach. That evening, the rock ran rampant in the streets of SoCal like an escaped dog (as did Mike Wiebe).
- The Marked Men at The Scene in Glendale. Proving once again that Rickenbackers aren't for pussies (ask Lemmy or The Jam).
- The Riverboat Gamblers, *To the Confusion of Our Enemies*. The Riverboat Gamblers strike Texas Tea, yet again. Fuckin' a.
- Sirius Satellite Radio's "Underground Garage" located on channel 25. You all owe Little Steven a drink or three.
- TEAC brand vinyl-to-CD transfer stereo units. Birthdays just got a whole lot better.

Denise Orton

- Sinkin' Ships, *All Signs Are Wrong*
- Tom Petty, *Greatest Hits*
- Strike Anywhere, *To Live in Discontent*
- Elliot, *Photorecording*
- Rumbleseat, *Is Dead*

Donofthedead

- The Soviettes, *LPIII*
- Neuron, *Gleichschritt*
- Sin Remedio, live
- Randy, *Randy the Band*
- Bumblaatt, *Ciegos*

Gabe Rock

- San Diego burritos and airplane bars are what make Punk Rock Bowling sponsor a hat on a bear.
- Played on repeat for 2/12/06: Billy Bragg & Wilco, *Memaids Avenue*, and Jawbreaker, *Dear You*. RIP 212 JPA1
- The Nice Boys, live at the Hemlock
- The Urchin/Anti Justice, split 7"
- Wild boars

Jennifer Whiteford

- *Top Five Songs to Get Me through the Cold, Cold Winter*
- The Runaways, "I Love Playin' With Fire"

- The Ramones, "Rockaway Beach"
- Sleater Kinney, "Burn, Don't Freeze"
- The Go-Go's, "Vacation"
- Banditas, "San Francisco"

Jenny Moncayo

Top Five Songs I Listen to on My Way Home from Work

- The Briefs, "Lintfabrik"
- The Buzzcocks, "Ever Fallen in Love?"
- The Buzzcocks, "What Do I Get"
- This Is My Fist!, "A Story of Reconversion"
- The Ignorant, "Belly of the Beast"

Jimmy Alvarado

- No Violence, *Invencível*.
- Backside-stompin' Brazilian hardcore.
- The Reatards, *Bedroom Disasters*.
- Bucket thumpin' rock'n'roll.
- Various Artists, *East LA: Rockin' the Barrio*. '60s rockin' from the greatest spot on the planet.
- We March, *The Madness Ends Here*.
- Heavy duty punk rockin'.
- Todd for being Todd: Krumpin' and shot-callin' g-loc c/s.

Joe Evans

- *Top Five Reasons '06 Is Kicking Last Year's Ass*
- Having played more shows (ONE!)
- At least one AMAZING show per month
- Seeing The Ergs! more than once every month (and the sandwiches that often precede them)
- Hunchback, *Ugly on the Outside*
- Songs from upcoming records I've heard so far (The Shemp's, Four Deadly Questions, The Unlovable)

Josh Benke

- Mind Controls, self-titled
- Jefferey Novak OMB, *Southern Trash*
- Ginny Arnell, *Dumb Head 7"*
- Link Wray, *Good Rockin' Tonight 7"*
- Knaughty Knights, self-titled 7"

Josh Lane

- *Top Five Ballads of All Time Ever*
- The Saints, "Messin' with the Kid"
- Bob Dylan, "Queen Jane Approximately"
- The Compulsive Gamblers, "Two Thieves"
- The Minutemen, "History Lesson Part II"
- Thin Lizzy, "The Cowboy Song" (A robot would cry during this song!)

Julia

- The Motherfucking Vikings taking 1st in the B-League at PRB
- Devo, live in 2006
- bittorrents (<http://btfaq.com>)
- The Ventures
- The Shadows

Math's hard. Ten is too high. Here are our top fives. Mostly music. But we're not fascists, so there are other things, too.

Kat Jetson

- Bad Dudes, *Dawn of the Dudes*
- *From Russia with Love* for PlayStation 2
- Jane Fonda's autobiography. I won't lie, my favorite chapters were the ones where she talked about Barbarella and Roger Vadim inviting other ladies into their bed.
- The Gossip at The Echo
- Nouvelle Vague at Tangier. They do the most proper version of Dead Kennedys' "Too Drunk to Fuck" you'll ever hear.

Keith Rosson

- Burial, *Never Give Up, Never Give In*
- Career Suicide, *Anthology of Releases*
- Dan Padilla, "I Liked That Dude" from their split with The Chinese Telephones
- Smalltown, *The First Three Years*
- Dukes of Hillsborough/Altaira, split CD

Kiyoshi Nakazawa

Underrated Comic Artists from Los Angeles

- Jordan Crane, *The Clouds Above*
- John Pham, *221 Sycamore*
- Sammy Harkham, *Poor Sailor*
- Ron Rege, Jr., *Yeast Hoist*
- Martin Centrada, *Dang!*

Liz O.

Five Really Good Cover Songs

- Soft Cell, "Tainted Love" (Gloria Jones)
- The Dirtbombs, "Insecure, Me?" (Soft Cell)
- Franz Ferdinand, "What You Waiting For?" (Gwen Stefani)
- Flunk, "Blue Monday" (New Order)
- Sunshine Blind, "I Ran" (A Flock of Seagulls)

Lord Kveldulfr

- 1964: The Tribute (not only the best Beatles tribute band in the world, but an ass-whomping rock'n'roll show, period)
- Brian Setzer, *Rockabilly Riot: A Tribute to Sun Records*
- Finally finding my old Hanoi Rocks tapes (and glamping out appropriately while zip-ping down I-94)
- The Rhythm Chicken telling me that he'll be in the States and in attendance at my graduation party.
- The Bombshells, *Audio Wasteland*

Megan Pants

- Toys That Kill, *Shanked!* and live
- Riverboat Gamblers, *To the Confusion of Our Enemies* and live at Punk Rock Bowling
- The Ergs!, Milwaukee recordings
- Red Forty, *Discography*
- This CD-R I made with all my Snuffy Smile 7's
- (because I want six) The Marked Men live twice in one weekend

Mike Frame

- Public Enemy, *New Whirl Odor*
- The Urgencies, *Desolation Chic*
- The Coup, *Party Music*
- Soda Pop Kids, *Write Home*
- Jukebox Zeros, *Four on the Floor*

MP Johnson

- The music of John Schneider. Who doesn't love Bo Duke joining up with Johnny Cash and Waylon Jennings to sing "Better Class of Loser"?
- Asia Argento (actress)
- Banana Nut Crunch Cereal. How much more sweet banana flavor could possibly be packed in cereal?
- *Born Bad* by Andrew Vachas (book)
- *The Gingerdead Man*, starring Gary Busey as an evil cookie)

Mr. Z

- Ozomatli, *Live at the Filmore* CD/DVD
- *Aeon Flux* DVD box set
- My daughter who turns two in May has started pointing to things and proclaiming "It's cool!"
- Wondering what is and isn't true on Wikipedia.
- That new and as yet un-named poppy Killer Dreamer song they played when Sharkpants came to town.

Miss Namella

- Indian Jewelry at Part Time Punks, The Echo: Because they rule the known universe with their right-on sound of noisy discord confusion and spooky death cult ambiance, a la Suicide meets Emperor.
- The Geisha Girls at Diskoteka, The Airliner: Still working on their new album and managing to piss off just about everyone working on it with them (way to go, guys!)
- Zolar X at Club Screwball, El Cid: Sucked ass. No spaceship, no love.
- The Warlocks at The Echo: What happened? I should just go back to doing drugs to appreciate this shit.
- Black Lips at The Knitting Factory: Pissing Factory. I made this really annoying older lady beg Cole to piss into his mouth for old time's sake; rocker dudes will do anything for a piece of snatch.

Nardwuar the Human Serviette

- Brutal Knights, *The Pleasure Is All Thine*
- *Go Metric* #20
- Tranzmitors, *Bigger Houses, Broken Homes* 7"
- They Shoot Horses Don't They?, *Boo Hoo Hoo Boo*
- Rick Moranis, *The Agoraphobic Cowboy*

Newtim

- Viewed Over the Past Two Months
- *Crash*
- *Hostel*
- *History of Violence*
- *Old Boy*
- HBO's *Carnivale* (Seasons 1-2)

Rev. Nørø

- The Scientists, *Pissed On Another Planet*
- Various Artists, *Let's Have Some God Damn Fun*
- Milky Ways, *I Don't Need You Girl* 7"
- Various Artists, *Rampage!*
- Pansy Division's "Bad Boyfriend" video

Rhythm Chicken

- The Figgs, *Palais*
- The Monks, *Black Monk Time*
- Anything by Freddy Quinn
- Milwaukee's "Madman Michaels," circa 1956
- The local homemade red table wine of southern Italy. I mean, how punk is wine with a bottlecap!

Rob Ruelas

- The Cramps, *How to Make a Monster*
- The Quakes, *Psyops*
- Demented Are Go!, *Hellbilly Storm*
- Cosmic Voodoo, *Vertigo*
- *The World's Greatest Horror Stories*, edited by Jones and Carson (book)

Rudy Olivarez

- Reagan SS and Japanner in the G-H-E-T-T-O at Casa de Olivarez
- The MC5, *A True Testimonial* DVD
- Dudman and NK6 at Cafe Kashmir
- Das Oath, nine-song mini 12"
- *The Warriors: Ultimate Director's Cut* DVD

Ryan Leach

- Gene Clark with the Gosdin Brothers
- The Byrds, *Notorious Byrd Brothers*
- Fender Precision basses
- Vanilla ice cream
- Hubert Selby, Jr.

Sean Koepenick

- Top 5 Bootlegs I Am Currently Enjoying
- The Ramones, 5/13/89 show at The Rodon Club, Greece. One of Dee Dee's last shows.
- Embrace, 12/4/85 show at the Hall Of Nations. No, not that new lame band that couldn't even come up with an original moniker.
- Kingface, live at the 9:30 Club in 1988. Mindblowing, and not even for the Van Halen cover!
- Burning Airlines, 6/28/99 in Cincinnati, Ohio. Where are you, Peter Moffett?
- The Replacements, *Pleased To Meet Me* demos. When you have tracks entitled "Guitar Noise," you know it kicks ass.

Speedway Randy

- Top Five DVDs on Repeat
- *Bullitt*, Special Edition
- *Found Footage Festival Vol. 1*
- Short films by the Zellner Bros
- *The Chappelle Show*
- Bob Log III's Electric Fence Story

Todd Taylor

- Lifetime, live in L.A.
- Riverboat Gamblers, live at Punk Rock Bowling and *To the Confusion of Our Enemies*
- Gorilla Angreb, *Long Island* b/w *Supersyn* 7"
- Tie: The Brotherhood of Electricity, *Invisible* 7" with Mojomatics, *Nothin About Nothin* 7"
- Randy, *Randy the Band*

Ty Stranglehold

- Top Five Quotes from Punk Rock Bowling
- "I'm the Dr. Kevorkian of boners."
- random San Diegan (alcohol killed all the names, sorry!)
- "Do you like licorice, baby, 'cause I'm a MAN!" -the same random San Diegan
- "Ranch shots!" -Glen Hoosegow
- "Let's go get herpes." -another random San Diegan
- "Gimmie that fuckin' beer! Don't you know who I am? I'm a fuckin' Slawson! Now, give me that goddamn beer!" -some drunk girl said this to me at the awards party



Hey Goober: Full album art is required for review. Pre releases go into the trash.

**101'ERS, THE: Elgin Avenue
Breakdown Revisited: CD**

Re-release of Joe Strummer's pre-Clash outfit. Bolstered with some live tracks, this is the definitive release of this material, unless you still have it on vinyl of course. Joe playing "pub rock" is a bit jarring at first, but after a few listens I'm sure you become enamored of it as I have. These are mostly Strummer originals, with some covers of Chuck Berry, Bo Diddley, and Slim Harpo brought to a live frenzy. "Sweet Revenge" and "Surf City" are my faves of Strummer's on this disc. Isn't it also illegal to not like a band that has a bass player called Mole? The 101'ers sweaty take on Them's "Gloria" is rock solid at close to eight minutes on the end of the record. Not groundbreaking, but highly entertaining nonetheless. I miss you, Joe. —Sean Koepenick (Astralwerks)

86 MENTALITY: Goin' Nowhere Fast: CD

This is a collection of their two 7" releases, a couple of unreleased tracks, and some live cuts. The music is yer basic template hardcore-meets-oif stuff, with no metal inflections to be found, which is a blessing, but the singer's voice—from the Slapshot Academy of Hardcore Warbin', but maybe deeper and a bit growlier—is a bit grating and detracts from the band's potential power, although I gotta say the live cuts are pretty strong. I was gonna crack wise on the silliness of releasing a "discography" when the band has been active a mere three years at best and have a grand total of two seven-inchers, but, if they can manage to scrape up nineteen tracks that clock in at a total of twenty-eight minutes, they're entitled, I reckon. —Jimmy Alvarado (Grave Mistake)

A DECADE BEHIND: Self-titled: CD

I was going to say something about That Dog and how they'd go "la-la-la" and then "Rarrrrr-rarrrrr-rarrrr?" I was going to say that this is somewhere in the middle where it stays static and oh-so-boring. Oh, and there's a eight plus minute "song" of a radio report with music and fuzz. I was going to say that this was boring, but inoffensive. I was going to say this until I got to their cover of "House of the Rising Sun" (which you shouldn't cover unless your name is Eric Burdon). If you're going to yell cookie monster meets death metal through the whole thing, please don't make anyone have to suffer through that. Do it for fun once in your garage, maybe record it for kicks, but for everyone's sake, keep that shit in you bedroom where you can hide your shame. Blech. —Megan (slipperyblacknoise@yahoo.com)

ABEST: Klaustrofobi: 7" EP

Sparse Dutch hardcore that is the aural equivalent to a Russian gulag. Although there's a lot of hard work going on and



time served, the movements are sparse, the atmosphere bleak, and the weather fuckin' cold. It's like they've taken the transitional parts of Dead Kennedys songs (think of the instrumental interludes or "Moon Over Marin" without vocals) and somehow incorporated them into the expansiveness of Tragedy, all set during a long, long winter. Not flashy, but expertly placed barbed music played with the care and precision of laying spools of wire on top of tall, foreboding buildings. —Todd (Kick n Punch)

AGAINST ME!:

Searching for a Former Clarity: CD

Against Me! has done it again! A fifty state tour, acoustic freebies and a brand new album to delight and entertain the masses. They definitely broke their mold on *Searching for a Former Clarity*. It is not an album that can be compared to either *Reinventing* or *Eternal Cowboy*. It's a new day, friends, and the boys of Against Me! are really working hard to keep things fresh. Let's start with the introductory song, "Miami," a raucous sing-along devoid of bullshit. It's best to listen to it with a bunch of drunken punks that hate their neighbors. A well-crafted and well-played song that again is just plain fun to sing! I've never even been to Miami but it's like I know exactly how they feel. Track three gives AM! a chance to take a shot at everything from corporate whores to the military. Good song, but way too short. Track five, "From Her Lips to God's Ears:" I absolutely hate Condolezza Rice and this song just solidifies that fact. Track six, "Violence," slows the pace of the album just enough to let you catch your breath for the remaining eight songs. Beautifully sung and very reminiscent of older AM! I wish it were acoustic, though. Jumping to track eight, "How Low" is a powerful song that touches even the most hardcore. Who hasn't

asked themselves, "How low can I go?" I love Cassidy Rist on this track; she compliments Tom's voice so well, like two lovers discussing their future. Track eleven has by far the most morality to it. The boys from Against Me! give the audience a rare look into the rigors of touring, the pressure to perform and the industry's effect on real artists who love the craft but not so much the politics. Tears formed when I heard this song for the first time. The music, the vocals and the overall feeling of this song is heart-breaking, very similar to "Pints of Guinness." This is definitely one of my all time favorites. Track thirteen, "Don't Lose Touch," reels you back into singing loudly with a catchy, hook-laden song that deserves top decibel car play and all the radio time it can get. It's a candy version of Against Me! that can be spoon-fed to the unenlightened. Not taking away from Tom Gabel or any of the guys from AM!, but this is a song that appeals to a broader spectrum of listeners and hopefully will encourage them to pick up the album and explore the wonderful world that is Against Me! —Robin Stone-Schweitzer (Fat)

AMBULANCE: The End of Our Time: CD

I would imagine they've got some sub-sub-pigeonhole they fit into, but what I'm hearing sounds essentially like death metal without the satanic/Texas Chainsaw Massacre lyrics. Although they're quite proficient at what they do, nothing about 'em really stands out. —Jimmy Alvarado (Wasted Sounds)

ANTEENAGERS MC:

Let's Not Have a Party: 7" EP

Here are the things that automatically come to mind with the Anteenagers MC: stilettos, pins and needles, walk-in freezers, and piano wire beginning to press on my throat while good music is being played. They're a French foursome from the musical incest pool of the

No Talents and Operation S who've picked up the best and most anxious bits of art punk. When I say, "Comparable to Entertainment-era Gang of Four," it means that they're both danceable (and not disco, like later Gang of Four), and angular (like a mannequin body in fancy clothes thrown out of a fourth story window. It's pretty, but it gets plenty fucked up on the landing, with appendages jutting out like broken tent poles.) It's hard for art to rock and for rock to be arty, but the Anteenagers MC pretty much nail it. Strong, strong stuff. —Todd (Plastic Idol)

ARMALITE: Self-titled: CD

I like comedians covering dog shows because they make jokes about pedigrees while the judges—in all seriousness and concentration—cup a dog's balls or stick their fingers in its mouth to reveal scary fangs. I sometimes feel like that when describing a new band formed from older ones, it's like I'm comparing their muscle and chops against their previous efforts and doing a mental tally against the genre (or breed, to keep stretching an analogy) as a whole. For example: Dan Yemin's on bass. Dan's been (and is once again in the reformed) Lifetime, Kid Dynamite, and Paint It Black. His string work is like a whip with a bit of candy at the end: a sweet, stinging, distinctive laceration. Atom Goren's on guitar and singing. Atom's probably most known for his one-man band, Atom and His Package, but he was also in a hardcore band, Fracture. Atom can make a song about his pancreas and turn it into an urgent singalong. Not easy. Mike McKee was the guy screamer (as opposed to the lady screamer) in Kill The Man Who Questions and he's the yin to Atom's yang; a bit more Philly steel and concrete, and that provides a nice balance. Jeff Ziga's also in Affirmative Action Jackson and he continues to be both tasteful and bashing drummer. So, Armalite, a probably-won't-tour, Sunday-practicing supergroup doesn't equal a mutt, and comes out as a barking, lean, evenly balanced, nicely coated, precisely-what-they-wanted band that put out a really good album. —Todd (No Idea)

ASHTRAY/THE RAPED: Split: CD

This is the audio documentation of The Raped's final show along with openers Ashtray. Judging by the cover (I know you're not supposed to do that), both bands would be in the realm of scum punk or something like that. Astray kicks it off, and my presumptions ring true. Mid-tempo punkers with dual girl and boy singers. They'd probably be pretty fun to see at a show drunk but the vocals really started to get to me. Let's move along to the headliners: The Raped. Holy shit! I was not expecting this. Imagine, if you will, Tesco Vee writing lyrics for Crass but with Joey Vindictive singing. I am not exaggerating! After the shock wore off, so did the novelty. —Ty Stranglehold (We Are Going To Eat You)

AUBURN BIKINI: Self-titled: CD

If you've ever lived in small town, one that you come to love, and not want to flee the confines of (not that you love your chains, but one in which you get all towed-out on) then you may relate to

Auburn Bikini. You've maybe been there before, a place where there's nothing going on but that which you make a reality through a homemade, hands-on kind of action. You may have even seen things and come to appreciate aspects of the life there which, to the outside world, seem like an abomination of what they consider true and to the heart. But you play house shows and do your best to make it with what you've got. Sure, Auburn Bikini play some songs about football. So what? I've seen punk rock soccer games, baseball games, hacky sack (yeah yew, right?), and, yes, football games, one of which was played at the Loveliest Village on the Plains. That's Auburn, folks. Home to the Bikini. Let me say a couple more things about football, this band, and the town they're from. There are about 45,000 people who live in Auburn. That's a small town. There is a football stadium that seats somewhere around 85,000. That's about double the population. At least a hundred thousand will show up five days out of the year for football games and start drinking in the streets. If you live there, it's going to have an impact on your life. It doesn't mean you're a jock or some frat guy. Shit, there's a song on here where the lyrics are, "I'm a barracuda/ you're a barracuda/ five years of marriage/ five years of marriage." What the hell? I don't know, do you? Auburn Bikini is about a good time; moreover, the best time you could possibly have. If you needed a show down there in the steamy south, then these guys would be one of your best times. -Dandy (Arkam)

AUKTION: D-Beat RNR Mayhem: CD

There's a tad too much metal in the mix for these ears, but when they veer off from the chugga-chugga and go into full-on thrash mode, they can tear it up with the best of Swedish hardcore, past or present. The piss-take on the Guns'n'Roses cover was a hoot, too.
-Jimmy Alvarado (Wasted Sounds)

AVERSIONS, THE: *Black Alibi: 7"* EP

You like the Hatepins? You like the Jam? You like the Stitches? The Aversions have snotty voices, sneered and leering faces, crisp and bright guitar work, striped shirts, and a lot of effort in how they look and sound. It all points to this conclusion: if Hostage Records had a French Canadian branch, the Aversions would be the first signing. The World Beach Invasion is spreading. -Todd (The Aversions/ In Style)

AXES OF EVIL / HOLLOWPOINTS:

Split 7"

Both of these bands would have been perfect for early-'90s Epitaph (especially pre-explosion Rancid), and I mean that in a good way, since there seems to be a dearth of non-parrot punk bands who hold older ideals nowadays. (Fashion's fine, but fashion > heart + talent = nope.) Axes of Evil: Metaltinged, full-throttle, mindful punk in the spirit of *Today's Empires*...era Propaghandi. Hollowpoints: Lead by a voice as ragged as a tattered flag, they're a serious-politics, serious-partying punk. In a perfect world, these guys would be as big as Anti-Flag and have their patches on as many assflaps

as the Casualties. Both these bands remind me of others who played in this general vein that never got their due, but I still regularly play, like Space Cookie and Mea Culpa. -Todd (New Regard Media)

BAD VIBES, THE: *All the Right Ways to Do You Wrong*: CD

When the first notes of this hit me, I cringed at the possibilities of another thug fest, the likes of Antiseen. There are some similarities, but the Bad Vibes are the much better band, and I liked this record more and more with every listen. It's got the power of a baseball-bat-ass-whipping, but the tunes certainly do not come off as stale and derivative. There is a good deal of musical inventiveness displayed here within the thug-punk genre, and I found it lyrically satisfying, stuffed with attitude but still showing a wry sense of humor at times and verbal playfulness. A good record that makes me want to get into fights. -The Lord Kveldulfur (Steel Cage)

BAD WIZARD: *Sky High*: CD

I was all excited to get this. I've been a fan of Bad Wizard's brand of Tight Bros-style party rock for years, ever since I first heard them a few years ago, with the story of how they got their name from a Mexican bartender mispronouncing "Budweiser." This album is a little different, the classic rock elements are still there, but with a little more of a maturing metal feel, this sounds like *Stained Class*-era Judas Priest or even a little like early Mötley Crüe, and I don't mean that in a bad

way. It seems weird saying that a band sounding like Mötley Crüe is a refreshing change, but in 2006 it really is....
—Ben Snakepit (Howler)

BASEBALL FURIES: *Lost Ones: 7"*

Honestly, the two originals on this pretty much mop the floor with their earlier records, and that's saying a lot. It's just nasty, mean-sounding rock and roll, and it's way the fuck better than anybody else out there. Get this—and all their other records while you're at it—or keep drooling into that bucket, I guess. Easily one of the best punk bands of the past ten years. —Josh (Alien Snatch)

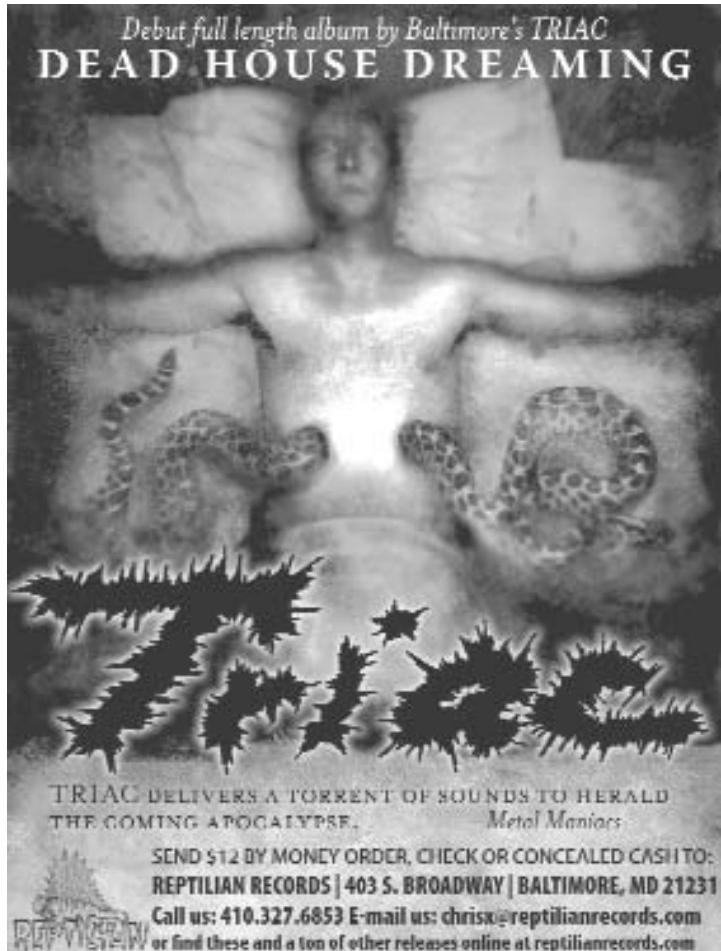
BEATINGS, THE:

Holding onto Hand Grenades: CD

This starts off sounding like Superchunk with Lance Hahn doing the vocals, which is pretty cool. About midway through it, the other guy starts singing or something and it becomes kinda bland, mediocre pop. Then it gets even worse, mutating into straight-up '90s alternative radio pop. It never really recovers. The rest of the record, which I might add is LO-O-O-ONG as shit (sixteen songs, most of which clock in at five minutes each), just drags on and on and it even seems like they added extra dicking-around-in-the-studio noises just to make it that much longer. By the end of it I wanted to kill myself. —Ben Snakepit (Midriff)

BELLIGERENTS: *Suck on This: 7"*

Drunk punk stuff that tries really hard to be obnoxious but only succeeds in being uneventful. Limited to three hundred copies. —Jimmy Alvarado (*Blind Spot*)



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BELLOW THE SOUND: Three: CD

Imagine Big Black without the intensity and Unsane without the psychoses and you'll find these guys somewhere in the middle. —Jimmy Alvarado (Crustacean)

BETERCORE:**Youthcrust Discography: CD**

Anyone have that Sugar Pie Koko 7"? It's a fucking awesome record; Swedish punk stuff that sounds like a mix of Charles Bronson and forty-five second-long Fingerprint songs, if you can believe that. Brutal, but just snap-y and catchy as shit. Betercore's treading that same kind of beautiful and dangerous sea with this discography—there's something about the trapped-bird vocals and song structures that allows this twenty-seven song discography to avoid becoming tedious or dull. Pissed off and fast as fuck, there's a catchiness that keeps you bobbing your head even as the band tries their best to throttle your god-damn lights out. And I think a group like this is one of few who actually pull off the squawking, rat-in-a-legtrap vocal styles that so many fast bands gravitate towards. To sum it up: Betercore was a staunchly DIY political punk band from the Netherlands who sang the praises of a vegan, pro-choice, anti-fashion, punk-as-fuck lifestyle, and they did it with a verve and passion that few bands can consistently pull off. Albums like this document why discographies, especially for now-disbanded bands with limited press runs on their records, can sometimes be a very, very good idea. —Keith Rossen (Refuse)

BIFF TANNEN/PILGER: Split: 7"

Biff Tannen: Fairly straightforward hardcore with a couple o' tunes addressing racism. The band apparently hails from the Isle of Wight. Neato. Pilger: More straightforward hardcore with lyrics addressing spousal abuse and self abuse and featuring the first hardcore tribute to Phil Ochs I've ever heard. —Jimmy Alvarado
(www.bifftannen.vze.com)

BLACK HATS, THE:**Hometown Nobodies: CD**

The undisputedly good news with Against Me! gaining popularity is that the gap between punk and roots country (without it morphing into some sort of assy tag like alt-country or adult contemporary country) is less of a leap. The undisputedly good news about The Black Hats is that they're unpretentious, play rock-solid, from-the-country (this time, Wisconsin) music that's both intelligently written and tastefully played. In an alternate universe, like the one of *The Blues Brothers*, a band like this could play Bob's Country Bunker to ten-gallon hat wearers, amped-up truck drivers, and road-weary punks. They could all join, arm in arm, while smashing empty beer bottles against the chicken wire in joy. That's a world I'd like to live in. Since that probably won't ever happen, I'll just sit back and savor my two favorite tunes: the title track and "Picture," that get me thinking that, with so very slight a tweak here and there, could both fit right into the Replacements catalog. —Todd (The Black Hats)

BLACK MARKET BABY: Coulda... Shoulda... Woulda—The Black Market Baby Collection: CD

Give thanks to the gods above ye seeking great punk rock (Okay, just thank Dr. Strange when you see him in the parking lot of Ralph's) from the late great '80s. Black Market Baby were a DC band of roughnecks who played hard, partied harder, and along the way wrote some great anthems of our time. After having their recorded output languishing out of print since the mid-'90s, music fans' prayers have been answered. Twenty-six songs of hard driving, no-holds-barred punk rock. You get classics like "America's Youth," "World at War," "Strike First," and "Nobody Wanted Us." Taking their cue from bands like Circle Jerks, TSOL, and Gang Green, the band molded a more melodic style to their tunes, but it still has plenty of fire and brimstone in the mix. Although they sported a few different line-ups, I'm guessing the definitive line-up of the group would be Mike Dolfi on bass, Tommy Carr on drums, Keith Campbell on guitar, and of course the irreplaceable Boyd Farrell on vocals. I'm making this broad assumption based on the fact that this was the line-up that played the farewell shows at the "old" 9:30 Club in DC in 1996. If this is wrong, send hate mail to the editor at *Razorcake!* But seriously, how can you not like a song like "Drunk and Disorderly" that features the classic line "they wanna punk me in the butt!" But get this CD—every track is a winner. The CD was remastered by Tom Lyle and the liner notes are by the one and only John

"Stabb" Schroeder (Government Issue). That's if my word is not enough! Black Market Baby = fantastic. —Sean Koepnick (Dr. Strange)

BLÖÖDHAG: Hellbent for Letters: Demo-version CD

The nutshell: Blöödhag play short heavy metal songs about science fiction authors. They play actual libraries (there's a mini documentary—*The Sooner You Go Deaf, The More Time You Have to Read*—about them) and they continue to pull from the deep well of authors they celebrate. (Although I was really looking forward to *R**d Like a Beast*, where Jake promised to be wearing a bloody book codpiece on the cover.) Think Municipal Waste, except thickly spectacled, with a little less DRI, played by guys in ties with latent professional wrestling tendencies. Sure, they're metal, but the solos are kept at bay and the doom and amplitude is stomping all over the place. Plus, you're learning and shit by rockin' out. It's like a book on tape overdubbed with a more growly Slayer. The only mystery, for me, is since this is a demo, no song titles. I don't know who they're honoring, which is half the fun of learning. Another welcome Blöödhag addition to my card catalog. —Todd (Alternative Tentacles)

BOMBSHELLS, THE:**Audio Wasteland: CD**

Fun, fun, fun. Thirteen songs of snotty rock'n'roll about drinking, fighting, and getting the stripper to go home with you and it never gets dull. I always find it thrilling when a band can create a famil-

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iar, raw, and uninhibited sound but still come off as sounding original. The Bombshells have done just that. In a lot of ways it sounds reminiscent of the Gotohells' *Burning Bridges* record, but *Audio Wasteland* is miles beyond that relative dud. This could be the soundtrack for a Saturday night beerfest: insurgent and rebellious if only for its own sake with an uncontrolled, rollicking sound. —The Lord Kveldulfr (Bombshells Music)

BORIS WITH MERZBOW:

Sun Baked Snow Cave: CD

This is just kinda one long weird noise with some clicking. At least I think it's clicking, or it might be my CD player fucking up, I can't tell. This shit is weird. Who would listen to this? It's like an hour long. —Ben Snakepit (Hydrahead)

BORN/DEAD: Repetition b/w Fear. 7"

Decent outing from a band I've heard accolades about for years now. The problem with a guy like me reviewing this record is that you've really gotta be head and shoulders above your peers in the doom-and-gloom hardcore world in order for me to sit up and take notice, and while Born/Dead are obviously good, there's just a little something that's missing. It's dark stuff for sure, with a decent blending of Tragedy's sense of injustice and buried melody alongside pals Strung Up's take-no-prisoners approach to hardcore; but it's also just a little too (no pun intended, guys) repetitive and, well, simply executed. It's not like I'm looking for insane fret board noodling and sixty parts to a song, but the two tunes here rang a bit more

like unused tracks from an LP rather than something to be taken by itself. —Keith Rosson (Prank)

BPA:

Maybe Use My Knife (1980-1986): CD

Who knew that there was another art damaged weirdo band from Ohio in the late '70s and early '80s? Not me, but I'm sure glad I've been enlightened to the ways of BPA. This is a compilation of their output through the first half of the '80s and I've got to say that it stands up to any of the similar stuff from the era. I can hear a little bit of everything. A bit of Devo, a lot of early Butthole Surfers... Talking Heads melded with Big Boys... I absolutely LOVE this! The thought of jocks cringing at this makes me smile. The liner notes do a great job of outlining the history of the band and report that they still play to this day from time to time. The (hopefully true) story about a drugged-up Madonna partying all night and refusing to listen to anything but BPA was also great. Track this down now. —Ty Stranglehold (Shake It)

BREAKS, THE: Get Saved: 7"

Hardcore from Chicago that has all it needs to achieve future "classic release" status: fast beats, stop-on-a-dime breaks, pretty good lyrics, pissed vocals, and a band tighter than Bush's grip on an oil-producing third world country. This is some seriously bad ass shit here. Be sure to send a full-length this way when it hit the streets, kids. —Jimmy Alvarado (Firestarter)

BROTHERHOOD OF ELECTRICITY, THE: Invisible b/w The Hearse, Nothing. 7"

Hell yeah. Revved-up, Young Lion Conspiracy rock'n'roll. They don't have to plead with the listener to boogie; it's all on the vinyl. It's hoppin', cracklin', slippery, bouncin' like popcorn sizzling in a pan without a lid. Listen after listen, in crept the spirit of The Gories, Poison 13, and the most electric-mouthed Gun Club tracks. The Brotherhood includes three folks (and a lady—ladies can be brothers in my book, too) who are or have been in eleven different bands, including The Winks, This Damn Town, and Tractor Sex Fatality. As a side note, the choice of a more roots-activated bunch covering Negative Approach's "Nothing" is excellent. Let's bring this all around: at its very core, this is music and the difference—if hearts are in right places—between hardcore and more garagery-rootsy punk ain't that big of a jump if folks are willing to look beyond the costumes and to gettin' down. Great stuff. —Todd (Super Secret)

BRUNT OF IT: Certain Uncertainty: CD

One of those groups that have all the requisite parts to classify them as "punk"—chanty choruses, loud guitars, occasional speedy tempos—and who mix in enough ska to be annoying, but are skimp enough on originality to seem destined for perpetual "opening band" status. —Jimmy Alvarado (www.bruntofit.com)

BULLETS IN: Conceive: LP

Yeah, I'm thinkin' there's way too much screamo pretentiousness in the batter to pique my interest. Sounds like bad

Jawbreaker-influenced hardcore with none of that band's charm. Next. —Jimmy Alvarado (Waking)

CHILI COLD BLOOD:

Rock N Roll Motherfucker Redux: CD

Initial Observation: Two dudes in cowboy hats and one in a trucker cap.

Initial Thoughts: Cripes, why me?

Expanded Post-Contact Observations: Damn decent (by my admittedly minimally qualified standards) Miller High Life drinkin' white boy neo-Delta blues (a far superior strain of the blues than that shitty Chicago blues that, owing to my unfortunate geographical placement, i am often subjected to) (although the singer does occasionally emit otherworldly ululations similar to the Windy City's own three hundred pounds of heavenly joy, Howlin' Wolf, so what the fudge do i know?), with some of the bitchiest pedal steel playing since that first Rose Tattoo album (though, to quickly clarify, this band sounds nothing like Rose Tattoo, or anything from the Southern Hemisphere, really). In this day and age, you gotta be Kinda On Your Shit to be able to sing about booze, trucker speed, and manslaughter without coming off as another pack of generic louts attempting to convince anyone stupid enough to listen to them that they're the 112th coming of Nine Pound Hammer; and Kinda On Their Shit Chili Cold Blood indeed is. Neat. **BEST SONG:** "Midnight Creep" **BEST SONG TITLE:** "I Feel Fine," just because it amuses me that they wrote a song that shares a title with a Beatles song. **FANTASTIC AMAZING TRIVIA FACT:** The drummer's name is

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"Bagpiper," but the absence of a bagpipe player in the band makes checking for reciprocity impractical. —Rev. Nørøb (Shake Your Ass)

CHILI COLD BLOOD: Self-titled: 7"

Guitar, drums, and pedal steel was the first thing I noticed, and not the boob displayed in a static fuzz on the cover. Had I noticed the boob first, I would have thought, "Oh look, a static fuzzed boob. Next please." It's not that it's not a lovely breast, but more along the lines of me not really caring. Hell, maybe it sells records. I don't know, but I don't care to read the market and/or trade reports on it. However, pedal steel—I'm all in for that. Actually, I don't think there's enough of pedal steel out there. So I was stoked on this one before I even played it. Now after listening to it several times, and not being sure if I'm into it or not... wait... let me sit back for a moment and listen to the low end on "Why Baby Why".... I can't say that I don't like it. It's pretty good stuff. I'm not going to compare them to any other bands, 'cause if you are into pedal steel it should be enough for you to get the record. Don't get me wrong; I don't want it to sound like I think of myself as a pedal or lap steel aficionado, all I'm saying is it's got that going for it, and that it doesn't sound clean or southwestern. It's more blues sounding stuff, with green bullet-type vocals, and a booby on the cover. You in? —Dandy (Shake Your Ass)

CHURCH OF THE SATURDAY SAINTS: Longboarder: 7"EP

It's simple and direct acoustic punk lead by a burlap voice, all very enjoy-

able. I've been thinking about this a lot lately, that punk rockers are the perfect candidates to pick up where country lost its way in the late '50s and early '60s. The DIY punks I know will play anywhere, anytime, just for the love of it, and there's a support system developing on those terms alone. They don't need a lot of fancy equipment. They aren't concerned with getting their songs in toothpaste commercials. There's a lot to be said of being able to roll into any town, finding a porch, a park, or a basement, and playing to anyone who's around and the Church Of The Saturday Saints totally hit that vibe. —Todd (Vinehell)

COLISEUM/DOOMRIDERS: Not of This World: Split CD

Here are two of the heaviest current bands in the U.S. right now, each doing a cover of a song from *Danzig I* and an original or two. I'm a big sucker for anyone who shows love for Danzig, as he is often misunderstood, especially among punks. Coliseum do a slower and more Sabbath-like version of "Am I Demon," then follow up with two of their own slabs of heavy, distorted d-beat hardcore. Doomriders follow with a song of Motörhead/Inepsy style rumbling hardcore, and then do a pretty faithful rendition of the far-too-under-rated "Possession." I'm glad to see such a serious appreciation for Glenn coming from both of these bands, as he had a large hand in developing the genre of music that these two bands (and a shitload of other ones that you probably like) play. —Ben Snakepit (Level Plane)

COMRADE KILKIN/OMISSION:

Split: CDEP

First off, you would think the bands names would be in reverse order since the Omission tracks are first. Omission: Sounds like Pennywise adding death metal riffs to their songs. Comrade Kilkilin: Better of the two featured here. Sounds like current hard rock meets hardcore. —Donofthedead (Rock-Love)

D.C. SNIPERS: Missile Sunset: CD

By saying the D.C. Snipers are a more sophisticated Spits, it's like saying they're more sophisticated booger eaters, but it's true. (For the record, The Spits are inspired booger eaters; not a talent to be offhandedly dismissed.) Whereas The Spits huff directly from the Ramones exhaust pipe for inspiration, the D.C. Snipers pull a duct-tape body wax from hairy, early New York artpunk like Television and Suicide. What that means is that they've got the straight-from-the-garage-2006 charm that doesn't take much intense thought to like while hanging a painting in the back of the drum riser with more artistic sonic brushes, full of weird sounds and not-supposed-to-work angles. Bottom line: fuckin' danceable, head-space-clearing stuff that'll hang both in gutters and fancy lofts. This is getting a lot of spins. —Todd (Dead Beat)

DEAD END KIDS:

Back from the Dead: CD

I know that I've heard these guys mentioned before but have never heard them until now. Well, from what I heard I think I like it. It seems that my players don't want to play

anything but selected portions of songs. Perhaps it's the disc, but I can tell you that what I heard is really good punk with some rock'n'roll twang with a dirty-sounding recording that suits the (portions of) songs just fine. I hope to hear it all soon, but deadline looms. —Ty Stranglehold (We Are Going To Eat You)

DEATH IN CUSTODY: Self-titled: CD-R

Tough-guy hardcore that sounds like it could've come outta mid-'80s New York. I can almost see a sea of baldheads dancing that weird mosh variant where they punch the air downward as these guys tear it up onstage. —Jimmy Alvarado (www.deathincustody.com)

DIRTY LOOKS: Demo tape

This is actually three-fourths of Bent Outta Shape with a different singer, and it's not too far removed from what that band is doing: kinda sloppy, kinda melodic punk that thrives in basements and warehouses. Unlike a lot of bands that get compared to the Avengers just because they have a female singer, there actually is a bit of a vocal resemblance here, except that it's a little bit more subdued than Penelope Houston's fearless wail. With a less muffled recording, they'd probably be just as good as—or better than—bands like Bitchin' or This Is My Fist. Five originals and a cover of my favorite Dead Moon song. —Josh (xbeergardenx@yahoo.com)

DISCIPLINE:

Downfall of the Working Man: CD

I haven't listened to too much street punk in the last few years. When I was

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digging through the piles at HQ looking for items to review, I ran across this band's release. I figured, "How bad could this be?" I did keep a copy of *Nice Boys Finish Last* that I got around 2000, so there was something in their music that made me keep it all these years. It was a good choice on my part. I don't remember really what the last release I have sounds like, but this one is great all on its own. I would call this advanced melodic street punk, not the cookie cutter wannabe oi stuff that newbie bands play when they decide that is the genre that is going to be played. These songs have a great hook and are carried with striking melodies. I am one big sucker when it comes to melody. The guitarist also adds cool guitar harmonies that add another dimension to the sound. It might not make me shave my head with a razor but it will get more than one listen out of me. —Donofthedead (Thorp)

DISKONTO: Watch Us Burn: CD

A long running "Dis" band from Sweden releases another one. I have seen their name around now for over ten years, it seems. But like many things in my life, I have not listened to or bought anything until now. Thirty-six tracks on this puppy, with half of them being live. I have listened to this release three times in a row now and I don't seem to tire of it. The lyrics are sung in their native tongue with the exception of their DRI cover, "Money Stinks." At first, I thought the recording sounded too clean. But, after multiple listens, it sounds refreshing and actually brings out some uniqueness

in their sound. What I like most about this recording is that they don't follow the same road as most bands in the so-called "Dis" genre. The elements are there, but they're at their best when they straight-up thrash. The songs sound like they can bore holes into concrete. The band plays with precision and, in unison, changes the tempos from fast to faster and back to fast. There were a lot of moments while I was listening where I would think that I would compare them to the first time I heard bands like Minor Threat or Out Cold. The power is right in your face. —Donofthedead (Crimes Against Humanity)

DRINKERS PURGATORY: CD

L.A.-area band with a vocalist who's a dead fucking ringer for the guy from Contra and Solidarity Pact; really throws me for a loop when his voice gets placed over generally mid-tempo punk stuff that toys with the same angular edges that make Giant Haystacks and, yeah, Gang Of Four and Wire so interesting. Unfortunately, the whole thing's kind of neutered by the fact that those edges are smoothed out by a kind of ho-hum punk bar-band feel. Best song has got to be the hidden track at the end—there's some real venom there and the music bounces and punches exactly when it should—but unfortunately they had to sandwich it between about six minutes total of someone's digital alarm clock going off. —Keith Rosson (Small Pool, no address)

EDWARD: Forward/Backward: CD

I haven't even opened this because if I shake it, it makes a funny sound and

makes my hand get tingly. Seriously, it's been the most fun I've had with a CD in a long time. Can't think of the right word? Shake the disc. Frustrated because the network goes down? Shake the disc. On hold for five minutes? Shake the disc until you giggle. Pretty color blocks too. —Megan (Merl)

ENDLESS FIGHT: Back to the Front: CD

I didn't think I was going to like this based on the slick cover art. But I do. Endless Fight hails from Canada and they play some mean speed metal. If these guys continue to build their fan base, see them on Relapse or Earache in no time, guaranteed. This shit wasn't a rehash nor a copycat of any other band... nor do they attempt screamo or nu-metal (*Thank god!*). This is the real shit. The real good shit, I should say. And the drum rolls: fucking amazing. I'm loving the chug-chug-chuggity chug of the guitars and the breakneck speeds of the songs just before the hellish breakdowns. Hell yeah, this CD kicks growling vocal ASS! —Mr. Z (Spook City)

FALLOUT, THE:

What Is Past Is Prologue: CD

The thing about Canada is that there is so much space between cities. Any band will tell you that touring this country is a difficult endeavor. Just too much empty space to contend with. It's also difficult to stay on top of what's going on at the opposite side of the country. Sure, the internet helps, but I just feel that I should have already known about and loved The Fallout. It's a simple formula, but I'm a sucker

for it every time. Straight-up '77 style punk a la Stiff Little Fingers with catchy, politicized lyrics. The twist here is that it's mixed with the sound of a late '90s Dr. Strange band (such as Whatever...). Throw in a touch of their friends, The Rebel Spell, and you've got yourself a winner. Now, they need to cross some empty space and play in the west. —Ty Stranglehold (Longshot)

FASHION! FASHION! AND THE IMAGE BOYS: Over Before It Ever Began: 7" EP

Going off the cover (where everyone has typewriters for heads), the band name, the band photo (jackets, sunglasses, and buttons), and a theremin listed, I was thinking new wave. Nope. More in line with the Candy Snatchers than the Epoxies, it's blades-out, beaten-by-clubs rock'n'roll fronted by a guy whose eyes I can easily imagine popping out of his skull from screaming so much all the time. The more I gave up on the new wave idea of the band, the more I liked 'em on their own merits. —Todd (Floridas Dying)

FIFTH HOUR HERO:

Not Revenge... Just a Vicious Crush: CD

Having listening to music for so long, I often play this game with myself. "What if Discount was a supergroup with *No Division*-era Hot Water Music and Alison didn't sing quite as much?" "What if they let it all spool out, did duets, and let it get epic?" (And not "whoah, dude," bong, big clouds, car chase epic, but high desert, full moon, clear head epic.) "What if Leatherface was French Canadian, and a bit more sweet? In what ways would the poutine

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offset the fish and chips?" Fifth Hour Hero answers all these questions: expansive, smart, and driving punk that's as much giving honor to the past as to looking through the cracked windshield, excited and weary, on the long highway to the next gig. Their first record didn't do much for me. This one's doing plenty. As they said to the dude who lopped off Marie Antoinette's head: well executed. -Todd (No Idea)

FINAL SOLUTIONS:

Return to the Motherland: 7"EP

Ack ack ack ack! The Final Solutions sound like the Urinals having a slapping contest with "Touch Me, I'm Sick" Mudhoney. Shouty, recorded-through-the-floor dirge that's somehow turned into chants, bubbling magma, greasy hair and torn-jean anthems with a Polish accent. If this slab of vinyl was a side of beef, it'd have "Killed By Death Approved" branded on the side. Features Jay Reatard on drums. A pitch-perfect, dragged-over-a-dirt-road listen. Good stuff. -Todd (Frick and Frack)

FLU: *Amalgamation: CD*

The next big band to make it into the mainstream with their overproduced, yet thin, sounding recording of hardcore meets emo pop. Mommy, please tell me when the bad band goes away. -Donofthedead (Sling Slang)

FOURTH ROTOR: *Plain: 9-song CD*

I, for one, am glad that the Minutemen aren't being forgotten, and that their spirit is being reconstituted like far-scattered spores into the blood of new bands. Much like Giant Haystacks, The

Forth Rotor aren't as interesting in cloning Boon, Watt, and Hurley as they are a fresh ride in a mode of transportation that's still has a lot of tread on the tire. Penetrating bass up front. Master swordsman guitar with no wasted movements. Blasting drums. Songs short and explosive. Voices barking. Words hurled like sharp and pointed rocks. Fill the tank, get in, pedal down, peel out. Nine songs, a little over fourteen minutes. No so much hardcore as lean, no-bullshit, econo focus. -Todd (Underground Communiqué)

FUCKED UP: *Generations: cassette*

Man, I've listened to this so many times and I'm still at a loss as to what I should be writing down. If you haven't heard of this yet, it's a self-released (though apparently distroed through Deranged) cassette of Fucked Up's live material, radio interviews, covers, and songs from side projects. On one hand, yeah, it's *Fucked Up*. That in itself carries a hell of a lot of sway around this household, I assure ye. On the other hand, there's so much repetition, tape hiss, and questionable sound quality on here that, while it's certainly not a *trial* to listen to, it's not nearly as seamless as even *Epics In Minutes*, their singles collection. I mean, "Baiting the Public" is a great song, but I don't really need to hear three different live versions of it. The extensive liner notes are a plus, they have moments of total brilliance (their cover of the Younghearts' "Try a Little Togetherness" is a good example) and, if nothing else, *Generations* is rock-solid proof that the band is capable of putting out (and going a fair way

towards upping the ante of) some of the best punk rock around today. That said, it'd also be a pretty shitty and disconcerting place to start if you're interested in checking out the band for the first time. -Keith Rosson (Deranged)

FULL MINUTE OF MERCURY:

Alive Again: CD

Egads, was this bad. Bubble gum pop, Maiden-influenced metal (hence the cheesy, has-to-be-a-joke cover art), and socially conscious pop punk Osterized for public consumption, although I would be hard pressed to figure who, outside of the hordes of who think Ashlee and Avril are the embodiment of all things punk, would bother to listen to, let alone buy something like this. Then again, one man's crap is another's "breakout hit," I guess. -Jimmy Alvarado (www.full.minute.com)

GAURITHOTH: *Perverse: CD*

I'm not a fanatic, but I love black metal, death metal, and all the other thrashhy hybrids of the genre. So, when I get something to review that fits into one of those notches, I get excited. This band from Finland throws down some mean-ass thrashing. Taking a quick look at their website, they play the part with the white make-up, black eyeliner, and fake blood. The music is the key here. It's not all modern and downtuned, but straight-ahead pummeling. With strong elements of punk in their mid tempo parts, the single note guitar riffs that make the thrash parts sound evil lets you know that metal is where they want to be. The screamed vocals are mixed up with the

cookie monster growls. The drummer sounds like a machine that is programmed to bash out beats with precision. The guitars are bright in an '80s type of recording style. I can't see many fans of this genre to be disappointed by this. -Donofthedead (Crimes Against Humanity)

GLEN MATLOCK: *On Something: CD*

Yes, I know this is over a year old, but it's only been available as a pricey import for awhile. El Cheapo Americans like myself have to sweat it until all the change from the couch cushions fall out. Third release with The Philistines. This cohesive backing band features Steve New (ex-Rich Kids) on guitar. With that introduction, you know it holds up underwater. "White Knuckle Ride," "On Something," and "On The Horizon" are the songs on here that hit home the most for me here. But you'll probably enjoy them all. One bit of irony here—note the record label below. Does this mean a certain song has to be dropped from his "part time" other band's set list? If it's up to a Mr. Lydon, I think not! -Sean Koepenick (EMI)

GOP, THE: *England Sucks: 7"*

The first thing I thought when the music started was: "Government Issue, sometime between *Legless Bull* and *Boycott Stabb*." Their singer has the same bored delivery as Stabb and the band thrashes along behind him quite nicely. Lyrically, they sound like they wanna upset both sides of the political spectrum, and there's nothing wrong with that. A nice little shot of youthful rambunctiousness to start the day. - Jimmy Alvarado (Blind Spot)

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GORIES, THE: Bug House: 7"

What I really like about the now-defunct Gories (Mick Collins is now in The Dirlbombs, Dan is in the Demolition Doll Rods, and Peggy's in The Darkest Hours) is that they often took their time. They're minimal, but it's a buildup, not just a holding pattern. It's this raw patience and tension that took me quite some time to fully appreciate. If you come across Gories vinyl in the bin, I highly suggest picking it up (this 7" is no exception) and giving it time to seep. Mick Collins and Co. were some of the true banner holders of raw, authentic rock'n'roll during a time (roughly 1989-1994) when techno was supposed to make human-made music more obsolete than the Laser Disc. The A side is one of the first Gories songs ever written. -Todd (Get Hip)

GORILLA ANGREB:**Long Island b/w Supersyn: 7"**

Imagine, for a second, that it's 1977. Imagine that L.A.'s X had never existed and that Dangerhouse never put out any records. Imagine X being Dutch and, instead of incorporating the Blasters, they had a time machine and what provided the backbone to the band was something approachable, yet hard and more steely, like a subtle cross-pollination of the Go-Go's and Amé Peterson's Arme. If I haven't completely confused you by now, Gorilla Angreb take the pure discovery of long-discarded treasures (even by the bands that did the pioneering) and make you feel like you've never heard something quite like this before. It's not quite pop. It's not easily classified

punk. They create mid-tempo, faultless songs that I just want to listen to over and over again. -Todd (Spild Af Vinyl)

GORT: The Arrival: CDEP

It's funny how two-piece bands that "jam on some heavy shit" have become a genre unto itself. This is a guy on the baritone guitar (that's like a big guitar with bass strings on it) and a guy on the drums, and a few occasional afterthought vocals. The problem with this is that when you have a two-piece band, you gotta do some spectacular shit to make up for it, like the relentless energy of Lightning Bolt or the technical proficiency of Hella or C Average. Unfortunately, Gort is neither relentless nor proficient. Mostly, they're just boring. I feel sorry for the engineer that had to sit behind the mixing board while they tracked this snoozefest. It's a nice try, just not nice enough. -Ben Snakepit (Feedback, no address)

GOSSIP, THE:**Standing in the Way of Control: CD**

This band is bluesy and dancey but not whiny or poppy. Not sure if that's a good description... but that's what I can come up with. The title track showcases the front woman's full range of soulful singing (on par with '80s Michael Jackson and shit... no lie) and comes complete with an Against Me! disco drum beat and a hypnotic bass line. The music sometimes reminds me of a polished XRBX... and that's an even worse description than the aforementioned one. That just means the band is constructing their own sound so craftily that you just can't pin them down to

one description. That, in my book, is a good thing. This is highly recommended for those who dig anything on Kill Rock Stars. -Mr. Z (Kill Rock Stars)

GREEN CARNATION:**The Acoustic Verses: CD**

What the hell is this? This fucking sucks. I guess this used to be a metal band or something back a long time ago, but now it's just boring acoustic crap that sounds like some shit you'd hear in a dentist office. This shit is so lame not even my mom would like it. -Ben Snakepit (The End)

GUTBUCKET: Sludge Test: CD

You know that term post-punk that has been often misused as of late? Well, it actually does apply to Gutbucket. Take the absolute strangest moments of Tuxedomoon and other similar artists from the 1979-1981 period, mix it up, and you have at least some of the elements evident on *Sludge Test*. As with bands from this era, Gutbucket recorded its latest effort on analog with help from San Francisco-based musicians/ sound engineers Jay and Ian Pellicci (Deerhoof, Erase Errata, Gravy Train!!!!). Similar to Tuxedomoon, in particular, Gutbucket has strong jazz leanings (all four members are jazz trained) and definite art school appeal. However, Gutbucket veers from the post-punk style in its completely anti-pop nature. There are no songs in the traditional sense on *Sludge Test*, nothing to hum alongside in the car. It is an album that requires careful listening with vocals that barely appear as vocals and drumbeats that stray from the 4/4 standard. -Liz Ohanesian (Cantaloupe)

HALO FAUNA: CD

It's a full-length CD of mildly acoustic stuff that would probably sound pretty at home on a label like Harlan or Plan-It-X. The vocals could be thrown in the same barrel as the guy from Alkaline Trio or John Samson from the Weakerthans. Musically, it's somewhat minimalist, generally consisting of undistorted guitar, bass, drums, and the occasional keyboard or clarinet. The thing that held my interest throughout the record was that these are essentially pop songs that lack any real bite or venom, but the lyrics are also intrinsically political, coming across as both poetic and enraged. I can see the vocals turning a lot of people off at first (as they initially did for me), but there's something about the band's earnestness and the singer's willingness to belt it out there even when he sometimes hits things a little flat or off-key that's really endearing to me. Best song has to be the last one, "Sunday School," where they ditch the drums and offer up a sparse and restrained song about humanity's constant and woeful misappropriation of "God's will." It's refreshing to hear a band that's political and intelligent without trying to out-thrash every other group out there, as well as hear some nice, often awkward pop music that steers far clear from the "I love her so-whoa-whoa" arena of chocolate and roses. -Keith Rosson (Halo Fauna)

HEADWOUND CITY: Self-titled: CDEP

Nine song EP from side project made up of members of The Locust, The Blood Brothers, and Yeah Yeah Yeah.

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The cover art is sick (in a good way) and the song titles probably give you a clue of what city we're headed to: "Prick Class," "Thrash Zoo," and "Michael J. Fux Feat. Gnarls in Charge." But the music is giving me a fuckin' headache. Triage is too late for this ripe discharge. Avoid this city at all costs. —Sean Koepenick (Three One G)

HEARTBURNS, THE/ FRANKIE THE DAMAGE: Split: 7"

Both bands play loud, mid-tempo punk rock with heavy guitars. —Jimmy Alvarado (Wanton)

HELL, THE: Self-titled demo: CD

This sounds like Drinkers Purgatory mixed with the first Hives EP on Gearhead. Lyrics about wanting to kill the bombmaker's daughter and making emo kids eat shit—you know, stuff like that. These songs seem more lame than sarcastic though: "Little rich girls, with diamonds and pearls, called me a faggot from the window of their dad's SUV... StabNGrab! Oh yes! Now I'm a criminal!" Uhmm... okay? —Mr. Z (The Hell)

HI-FI KILLERS / LOS DRAGOS: Split: 7"

Lo-fi, kinda snotty punk from these bands. Los Dragos have a vaguely rockabilly vibe on the first song and then a faster garage vibe on the second one. Hi Fi Killers sound like a slower, trashier version of the Briefs or Hatepins. Both songs are similar and real lo-fi. Snotty punk, vaguely mod, and vaguely new wavey in parts. —Mike Frame (Nicotine, www.nicotinerecords.com)

HI-FI KILLERS, THE/LOS DRAGOS: CD version of split 7" for them that don't have any turntable: CD

Hmmm... the first Hi-Fi Killers song sounds kinda like a he-man version of the Willowz (pre-total suckage), whilst the other sounds like a decent stab at Little Steven's *Underground Garage* type music that has just breathlessly arrived at the dock, ticket-bearing arms flailing madly, only to see the ship sailing out to sea without them. The first Los Dragos tune starts off like the Dead Kennedys playing rockabilly with a mousetrap for a snare drum, then augments that with some tastily repulsive Greg Ginn/Gary Farrell guitar leads the likes of which i ain't heard in a while. Second song is kinda more Mooney Suzuki-ish. Further observations have been withheld in lieu of a blank stare (stares). Okay, i'm done. BEST SONG: Hi-Fi Killers, "Broken Babe" BEST SONG TITLE: Los Dragos, "No Woman No Chain" FANTASTIC AMAZING TRIVIA FACT: The disc graphic looks like a cross between the cover of the first Joe Jackson album and the paneling at that club The Raven in Denver. —Rev. Nørø (Nicotine)

HILLSIDE STRANGLERS / BITE THE BULLET: Split: 7"

Hillside Stranglers sound like a band that could have been on a bill with the Necros or Die Kreuzen in the early '80s. Really cool, trashy Midwest hardcore punk sound. They are from Detroit so they probably grew up on that stuff. Bite The Bullet appear to be from Germany and have kind of a melodic street punk sound. Seems like they

would go well on a bill with a band like Oxymoron or Lower Class Brats. Good, solid green vinyl single. —Mike Frame (Detroit Noise)

HJERTE STOP:

Äärh, Fuck... Der er HjerteStop!: 7" EP

What's up with Denmark? Do they have a punk lab that distills some of the best and most exciting hardcore of yore (Minor Threat, Black Flag), then cross-pollinates it with the fresh wounds of recent bands like Career Suicide, Regulations, and No Hope For The Kids, while dangling a new pine-scented air freshener on the rearview mirror? Hjerte Stop's part pioneering sprit, part lighting Molotov cocktails with extended middle fingers, part pissing in the mouths of cops, and part good, old-fashioned ripping along. They're right in the vortex of a strong stable of Dutch bands that aren't giving up nor slowing down. —Todd (Kick n Punch)

HOGAN'S HEROES: Self-titled: CD-R

Given the dearth of information with this, I'm not quite sure what their motivations or intentions are, but collected here is the work (three LPs, assorted singles, demo tracks, and unreleased stuff) of a late-'80s hardcore band best remembered as being part of New Red Archives' stable of bands. The music is fast'n'furious, pissed off, and holds up consistently well, managing to get the blood pumping just as well as it did a decade and a half ago. Not sure if this is a "press copy" of a soon-to-be-released discography or something, but if so, it might be a good addition to that birthday/Christmas list. —Jimmy Alvarado (no address)

HUNDRED YEAR HEX /

WITH CHILDLIKE EYES: Split: CD

Hundred Year Hex are a lo-fi mishmash of some of the lamest music of all time. Scream, tech-grind, and electronica combine into a dull soundscape. With Childlike Eyes are more spazzy tech-grind and just as dull. Both bands are vaguely annoying, so I guess they achieved one of their goals in the uneasy listening realm. Hooray. —Mike Frame (Gilead Media)

I FARM: So My Kids Won't Have To: CD

When did this happen? I can't say that I didn't like I Farm before. I also can't say that I was really in to them either, but something changed and this album has been getting heavy play by me this time around. Shit if I know what changed, but damn if I'm not happy about it. Snotty pop punk that's smart and topical (and pertinent even though it was originally recorded almost ten years ago (it's a reissue). Maybe more bands should experiment with 523-17. —Megan (Blackout)

I LOVE YOU BUT I'VE CHOSEN

DARKNESS: Fear Is On Our Side: CD

Dreamy shoegazer-type stuff that leans toward the My Bloody Valentine/Medicine end of the spectrum but doesn't quite near the sonic density of those bands' best work. Still, it ain't a bad listen by a long shot. —Jimmy Alvarado (Secretly Canadian)

I-ATTACK: American Dream: 7"

Strong hyper-tempoed hardcore with political lyrics. If I had me a radio station, the title track would get much air-

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play. Nice to see Chicago's punker scene ain't lost its touch. —Jimmy Alvarado (Criminal IQ)

INOCULATORS, THE: *Dropped Their Brains: 12"*

This was an unexpected surprise. The cover art looks like Hellraiser goes to Disneyland, so I was leery of what I would find inside, expecting clichés and worn-out punk rock rhetoric. There is a bit of that, but, for the most part, this is a very solid record. Musically, it kind of sounds like Less Than Jake mixed with dirtier, crustier sensibilities; the ska influence is definitely there on some of the songs, but when the Inoculators crank it up this is a great vehicle for rock'n'roll fury. They also have some overtly political songs in here, which seems to be a no-no these days, but they don't dominate the record so as to define them solely as a political band. I woke up this morning with their "Two Party System's Fucked Up" in my head—kind of a cheesy title, but it sent me blazing into the day. A solid record that is variously fun, thought-provoking, and critical of the State Of Things in the Twenty-first Century. —The Lord Kveldulfr (Inoculators)

INOCULATORS, THE: *Dropped Their Brains: CD*

I met the singer of this band outside the Troubadour right after I took pictures of the Japanese band Last Target. I was heading home because I wasn't interested in the other bands, including the headliners. I think The Briefs headlined that night but I was right out the door. Not having gone out to a legitimate club

in a while and going to DIY shows lately, I wasn't feeling the environment. We had a brief conversation that was cordial and he quickly told me about his band. I told him good luck and I was on my way. The guy has a good memory because mine is decaying. Sitting in my in-box was an envelope addressed to me at HQ. He sent me a CD. I listened to the release and I can't really find fault in the music. But at the current moment, I'm not really feeling it. The songs are melodic and the added ska parts make the songs more interesting. The recording is top notch. These are things that I enjoy in a band. If this was five years ago, I would be drooling over this. This goes into the pile of CDs and records that I have to listen to much later. —Donofthedead (Inoculators)

INSTANT AGONY: *One Man Army b/w Got You Sussed & One Law: 7"*

Sounds pretty much indistinguishable from any number of U.K. streetpunk records from '82/'83—Riot City Records and what not. Sorta like the kind of thing i used to hear on the butt-ends of compilation tapes that friends would make from my 45s back in The Day, and I'd have to ask the dude who made the tape who the band was, because i didn't remember, even though it was my record he made the tape from. The sleeve is kind of cool. I've heard worse. BEST SONG: "One Law" BEST SONG TITLE: "Got You Sussed," i suppose FANTASTIC AMAZING TRIVIA FACT: Vocals by Hocky, sleeve by Tabby, photo by Whizzy! —Rev. Nørø (Puke N Vomit)

INSTANT AGONY: *One Man Army b/w Got You Sussed & One Law: 7"*

Few things are more pleasant for a geezer like me than to hear a band from when I was a kid crank out new tunes with the same conviction, passion, and power as they wielded way back when. Three original short, to-the-point ravers from these guys, none of which are a waste of vinyl or time. —Jimmy Alvarado
(www.pukenvomitrecords.com)

IRONBOUND: *With a Brick: CD*

Modern day hardcore is a two-way street for me. I either like it or don't. That determination is usually made right off the first minute of the first song. This one I didn't like. The machismo was overbearing right from the start. The lyrics were cookie cutter and the vocal delivery was flat. A little studio trickery could have helped. The tempos of the songs tended to be a tad slow and similar from one song to the other. This reminded me of mid- to current-period Agnostic Front. Having two members of Sick Of It All record on the first five songs didn't help. —Donofthedead (Thorp)

JERK OFF JACK OFF FRIG FACE: *Songs from the Outlaw Country Musical: CD-R*

Starring Too Bad Stremicki and Abby Banks. This is so freakin' good that I get drunk at least once a week and lose it in the CD player for a few hours. Write now and see if you can get a copy of this: it's a freaking musical, one with songs like "One-Thousand Ghost McGee," "Whiskey!," "Tattoo for Breakfast," and "The Man Who Shot

Everyone in the Face." It's all acoustic with character-driven pieces. If it sounds like theater, then it's because it is. I saw them on tour this summer, and if there was ever a rejected vaudeville show that played in the alleys or homes of the people who didn't go in for the big time of the day, then this is it. I don't know if they'll tour ever again, and that's okay. But if you listen to this and let the cartoons play out in your head, then you'll be doing fine. It's all right. It's only make believe. —Dandy (jerkoffjackoffrigface@yahoo.com)

JULIETTE:

From Somewhere in the East: CD

This disc has me at a bit of a loss. I popped it in the car and took off for work. A few seconds into the first song I was convinced that I was listening to another Canadian pseudo emo/hardcore band. Seriously, this sounded so much like all the stuff that was happening here in Victoria in the mid '90s, I was convinced that it may have even been local. Nope, this is Poland, not Victoria! It still really took me back to hear something that sounded so much like Render Useless or M-Blanket. Unfortunately, the vocals snapped me out of my trip down memory lane. Wow, that's painful. Do you remember those stories about the guy who would soak pieces of bread in Liquid Draino and go out and feed them to seagulls to watch their stomachs explode? I am convinced that the singer of Juliette sounds exactly like what one of those seagulls would sound like right before death. It's too bad because I kind of liked it musically. —Ty Stranglehold (Refuse)



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KARATE FOR KIDS/FRAME: Split 7"

Two song by both bands; they're taking the pop punk blueprint laid out years ago by bands like Jon Cougar Concentration Camp, Organic and, more recently, Altaira and Snugge, and trying their damnedest to keep their heads above water. And for the most part, they do. Thoughtful, fairly aggressive, and melodic stuff by both outfits, with Karate For Kids managing to come out on top if only for their more consistent level of intensity. Frame's pulling their weight, don't get me wrong, but there are moments when the guy in that band *sings* rather than bellows, and the result is more cloying than dynamic, also showcasing just how easy it is to fuck up songs like this when your bark is worse than your bite. As it stands, Karate For Kids does remind me more than a bit of Altaira, and that's definitely a compliment, and Frame is kind of poised right of the cusp of grasping the "really good pop punk" label; they just need to add a bit more barbed wire and subtract a little more bubblegum. —Keith Rosson (Salinas)

KEITH PYLE: Peace and Quiet: CD

Twelve songs of indie pop/twee/power pop from Sacramento, California. First tune has some real cool Sweet-esque glam pop vocals on the chorus. Seems to shift back and forth between "mature" power pop and quirky twee from there on out. Pretty good lo-fi pop that has as much to offer fans of twee/Matinee Records as for fans of basement power pop/Not Lame Records crowds. —Mike Frame (www.keithpyle.com)

KILDOZER: The Last Waltz: CD

A live recording of the very last Killdozer show from November 1996. Apparently, this was originally issued on Man's Ruin and has been out of print for a long time. I can't even pretend to be a fan of this band or this style. I never went in for the AmRep/Touch And Go stuff way back when and it hasn't aged well. However, if you are a fan of this stuff, this is a good addition. The sound quality is very good, there is a lot of witty banter, and all the sludgy noise you could ask for. —Mike Frame (Crustacean)

KNUT: Terraformer: CD

Knut plays typical heavy rock. I guess you'd call it stoner rock. I hate to pick on this band, but I am sooo bored to death of this kinda shit. Just because you tune down and play slow and listened to Sleep a few times doesn't mean you're blowing anyone's mind with how heavy you are. Listening to this makes me wish I was stoned so I wouldn't have to pay attention to it. Isn't anyone else bored of this shit yet? I am especially maddened by the last track, six minutes of just one note on a keyboard or something. Even I think these dudes need to put the bong down for a few minutes. —Ben Snakepit (Hydrahead)

LAST LAUGH: No Regrets: CD

Florida isn't all beards, gators, and good times. It, too, is beset with well meaning fans of Bad Religion, NOFX, and The Offspring starting bands in their image. Although I'm only a recent transplant I'd like to apologize on

behalf of California to all local music scenes suffering under this oppression. My only advice is to start showing up to shows about forty-five minutes to an hour after doors open. If you still see khaki shorts on stage, turn around and try again in fifteen minutes. Stuart FL's Last Laugh play adequate but unimpressive California style skate pop punk. If you like that sort of thing maybe mixed in with Rise Against, you're set. I'm not so stoked, personally. Plus they add to the growing pile of shitty "Paint It Black" covers out there and the bass player actually admitted in writing on their website that he preferred new Metallica to old. What the fuck is that? —Steve (Suburban Noize)

LAST LAUGH: No Regrets: CD

Formulaic, emo-tinged pop punk that ain't all that different from thousands of others—bland, banal, boring as hell. —Jimmy Alvarado (Suburban Noize)

LIVEFASTDIE:**Bandana Thrash Record: CD**

Huh. Maybe I'm just remembering something that didn't happen. About five years ago, plus or minus, there was this band called What Happens Next (named, I think, from the Ill Repute record). And they started, or were influential in the genesis of, and coining the term, "bandana thrash." It was a genre, a reflux of the late '90s back to the source code of thrash, that bit of time where Corrosion Of Conformity and DRI seesawed between punk and metal and crossover was an interesting concept. Anyhow, Livefastdie have nothing to do with

that. This isn't "bandana thrash," and so I'm just confused. They like the Devil Dogs, production-less Ramones, early GG Allin, and the Reatards, and it's a totally fuzzed-out, in-the-red garage affair that's pretty darn good. I just can't put the title and the band name together with what I'm hearing. I suppose folks who've never experienced "bandana thrash" firsthand won't have such hangups. —Todd (Dead Beat)

LOVED ONES, THE:**Keep Your Heart: CD**

I know I'm not "pro," but fuck it. I listened to this record a couple of times and it slid right by me. Put it on, zip, half an hour passed, I put another record on. An oily egg on a teflon pan. But I was taking a shower, where a lot of the musical decisions in my life occur. I ask myself questions like "Do I like this band?" "Hype?" The true test is if I'm humming something I can't trace. It means a band's wiggled into my subconscious somehow. That happened with the Loved Ones. Little by little, the songs stopped being one mass with a couple of bright spots, and they separated into their own worlds. Same thing happened to me with Alkaline Trio. It brings me to this conclusion: sophisticated pop punk that drips a Lifetime-like, melancholic romanticism—lyrically, there's longing, pure intentions, and hope—and shows a tender underbelly that contrasts nicely with the recent flood of intentionally ooky spooky eyeliner and man-crying bands. —Todd (Fat)



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LYME REGIS: Self-titled: 7"

Composed of two-thirds FM Knives and one-third Other Dude, the mighty SmartGuy press machine is already touting the band as "The Jam to the FM Knives Buzzcocks"—after a quick compare/contrast of the three Lyme Regis originals to the "unrecorded FM Knives gem" "Suffer, Suffer," it might be posited that a more correct range of values would suggest L. Regis are more like the Foxton/Diggle to the FM Knives' Weller/Shelley, but it is early in the game and i have not done all the math so i'll need to get back to you on that. Basically, at present, this band is one of those bands that is made up of former members of a band i really liked, and sound just different enough from the original band that they are *not* that band, but yet do not sound different *enough* to be a wholly different animal. That is to say, Lyme Regis is the Raydios—not the Tweezers—to the FM Knives' Teengenerate (now that i think about it, this sleeve looks kinda like Teengenerate's "Flyin' Over You" 45) (but worse). They are the Gaza Strippers—not the Lee Harvey Oswald Band—to the FM Knives' Didjits (*not that anyone in the Didjits was ever in the Lee Harvey Oswald Band! Absolutely not! No sir!*). Essentially, they sound alternately too much and not enough like the FM Knives—although, to be fair, "USA" sounds more like a revved-up, vaguely politicized Real Kids; "Million Years" is one of those faux-soul downtempo fifth/sixth Jam album things; and "It Starts With The Band" is merely generic mod/power pop (flavored with Arco Arena cowbell

clunking), so i admit there is moderate probability i do not know from whence i speaketh. Not a bad record by any means, but ditching the WORST BAND NAME EVER before it becomes unditchable might indeed be a step in the right direction. BEST SONG: "USA" BEST SONG TITLE: I'm not voting for "USA" so it had better be "Suffer, Suffer" FANTASTIC AMAZING TRIVIA FACT: "National Advertising" —Rev. Nørø (SmartGuy)

MANTITS/JOHNNY HOBO AND THE FREIGHT TRAINS:

Love Songs for the Apocalypse: Split CD
Acoustic songs filled with fear, loathing, and plenty of drinking. If you don't mind trumpet squalls mixed in with the strained vocals, you may like it. At least titles like "Whiskey Is My Kind of Lullaby" and "I Want Cancer for Christmas" show potential for creativity. But Johnny Hobo's side may need a few songwriting revisions with help from Boxcar Willie at the campsite. Mantits tries to be clever with smart ass lyrics, but end up sounding like a third rate Ween. Have I mentioned lately that I hate Ween—with a passion? —Sean Koepenick (Spare Change)

MAXIMUM RNR: Horns Up: CD

I was totally gonna blast 'em for the infinite lameness of naming one's band after a popular punk rag that's still publishing, but their blend of hardcore and AC/DC styled rock was interesting enough to keep me from raising a stink. Dunno how Tim's progeny are gonna feel about it, though. —Jimmy Alvarado (Maximum RNR)

MEAN REDS/**WIRES ON FIRE: Split: CD/DVD**

Two songs each from these L.A. based bands. Each band does one of their own songs and then a cover. Mean Reds' "Memories I Think" is fairly enjoyable while their cover choice of "Minor Threat" has a funky keyboard part in the middle that may catch the listener off guard. Wires on Fire's original is "Million Dollar Maybes" which seems to be an ode to their favorite artist—Alice Cooper. I'm taking a shot in the dark here since they cover "I'm Eighteen" as their next selection. "Poison" would have been nice—but let's not split hairs here. The DVD that comes with it is from a show that the bands did in a warehouse in L.A. in October 2004. Nicely shot but there was a little too much footage of half-inch flaccid pork torpedoes in both band's set. Trust me on this—I watch so you don't have to. —Sean Koepenick (Buddyhead)

**MEASLES MUMPS RUBELLA:
Fantastic Success: CD**

This starts off on a new wavy, arty vibe and then they just let loose with stabs into artpunk, ambient soundscapes, and points in between. Very eclectic and ambitious in sound. —Jimmy Alvarado (Doubling Cube)

MEDIC / TRIAC: Split: 7"

Medic: I honestly don't know if I'd like this as much if I didn't know that Dave and Tem (of the dearly departed Super Chinchilla Rescue Mission and awesome dudes) were playing on this. I do know that I really like the guitar parts.

It's like being stuck in the middle of a swarming hive of mechanical bees. My only 50/50 is that I'm not too big of a fan of the vocalist, who sounds like an ogre with a throat polyp. For fans of Dillinger Escape Plan, Triac: These dudes aren't happy, but they're good, technical musicians that mix mud, metal, grind, and Slayer with the occasional ambience of doom in the vein of Buzzoven. I bet they lit a lot of things on fire when they were kids and continue to have bad dreams as adults. —Todd (Reptilian)

MERCURY RADIO THEATER:**The Blue Eyed Model: CD**

Oh, those zany art students! This is a story of our protagonist, Gregor, looking for companionship and the troubles that ensue. This is told through a wonderfully enunciative storyteller and instrumental segments. There is also a beautifully colored comic storybook in the liner notes. This is fantastic. I'm not sure how often I'll listen to it, but, as a concept and for a listen or two, I'm impressed. —Megan (Lujo)

METHADONES, THE:**Not Economically Viable: CD**

I usually stay away from saying things like "my favorite band is..." or "the best band in the world is..." simply due to the fact that it would be impossible for me to decide. I listen to countless genres of music (from jazz and afro-beat to rock, hip hop and countless off shoots of such things) and this list is way too immense to even begin formulating a specific answer to those types of questions. What I can do is tell you is which band

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has been in constant rotation in my car and at work this winter. I play their albums over and over again and never seem to get sick of them. Their songs manage to make me smile and feel better about life in a way that shows I'm not the only other melancholy romantic out there who isn't gothic or emo or (insert sad-face stereotype here). Yes, folks, it's The Methadones I'm rambling on and on about. Their dark and full-bodied take on pop punk is fucking amazing. It's not the thumb-up-your-but pop punk of Blink-182. It's not the whiny pop punk of New Found Glory. And it's not as simple and stripped down as bands like The Ramones, either. Although Dan Schafer, the frontman for the Methadones, was in Screeching Weasel, this band also doesn't take on a bratty tone nor the arrogant know-it-all stance of the aforementioned band or, let's say, the Queers or MTX. The music is nothing short of amazing. Great guitars, perfect drums, and the best lead and backing vocals of any band out there right now—mainstream or not. The lyrics kill me; they are so beautiful and smart and sad and cynical and positive all at the same time. Each full-length takes you on a rockin' emotional roller coaster while the catchy choruses and hooks stick in your brain like white on rice. The first album on A-F was good. But it wasn't until *Career Objective* that the song writing took full shape and dropped my jaw to my chest. *Not Economically Viable* is wonderful, too, though. There are more songs on *Career Objective* that seem to steal your heart at first listen, but this album

is just as good and it's a themed album loosely based on one of my all-time favorite movies, *Falling Down*, which portrays Michael Douglas' character as having a nervous breakdown in the post-modern world we live and work in—you can tell I dwell in cubicles by day, can't you? A themed album is hard enough... imagine undertaking such topics! It's beautiful, I tell you, just beautiful! I haven't been this emotionally attached to nor impressed by every piece of music on a pop punk band's discography since Washington's Sicko (and quite possibly the Vindictives before that). Ah, my beloved Methadones. This is the real deal folks. Real emotions. Real topics. Real good music, and if you're not a fan or have never heard them before, start off with *Career Objective* and see if I'm not spitting the truth. —Mr. Z (Thick)

MILKY WAYS, THE: *I Don't Need You Girl* b/w (*Can't Seem To Find*) My Way Back Home: 7"

The a-side is about fifty percent *Pebbles*, thirty percent *Insomniacs*, and twenty percent *Fevers* from a songwriting perspective, but about fifty percent Flamin' Groovies circa "Jumpin' Jack Flash," thirty percent *Pebbles*, and twenty percent Les Sexareenos from a recording/execution standpoint. The b-side is similar, but not identical; however, the software program I use to calculate all these amazing percentages is real buggy and it crashed once I input the data that Roy Oden is now in a band with Oily Chi, so I won't have the exact figures for a while. BEST SONG: "I Don't Need You Girl" BEST SONG

TITLE: "I Don't Need You Girl" FANTASTIC AMAZING TRIVIA FACT: *This vinyl has no label! None! It's bare-ass nekkid!* Awk! — Rev. Nørb (Goodbye Boozy)

**MODERNETTES, THE:
Get It Straight: CD**

I read a quote on the label's website that states this is part of the second wave of Vancouver punk. I don't hear that. This band had a short existence, lasting from 1980 to 1983. I was around back then, but I was here in L.A. and not in Vancouver. What this sounds like is one of those psychedelic garage rock bands off one of those *Nuggets* comps. Another description that comes up in my head is if X was not a punk band and was part of the Haight-Ashbury scene of the late '60s. I was way off on this one. —Donofthedead (Sudden Death)

**MODERNETTES, THE:
Get It Straight: CD**

If this is punk, then it's punk in its pajamas and slippers, curled up in a blanket on the couch and complaining that "it's too cold in here." But maybe it's not pretending to be punk. I can never tell these days. Either way, the "ettes" suffix in the band name proves to be something of a tip-off: there is simply something diminutive about this band and—to put it in crude parlance—I think it's their nut sacks. Sorry, I know it's probably supposed to be lite, fizzy fun, but it just sounds annoyingly hip and safe to me. And wearing '50s style hepcat saddle shoes doesn't make any of it cool. —Aphid Peewit (Sudden Death)

MOI?: Self-titled: CD

There is a thin line, on occasion, between charisma and yuck. This, however, is not one of those times: This is yuck by a country mile. Sounds like very confused 1978-era AM radio non-hits; right around the time when no one could decide if they should use tinny little Steely Dan jazz chords or disco beats, so they used some frail amalgam of both. Vestigially "glam" in the same way that Sweet's tinny AOR hit "Love Is Like Oxygen" was (that is to say, *wasn't*), or possibly like Nick Gilder or Alvin Stardust minus anything resembling their scanty amount of good tunes. Ordinarily, gentle consumer, I would urge you to give this product the widest of all possible berths, but I can't imagine that's at all necessary—the cover should be enough to keep your wallet safely riveted in your pocket. *Non, ne t'as pas.* BEST SONG: "When She Wakes Up It Is Cold" BEST SONG TITLE: "Dried By The Sun" (seriously. That's the best one) FANTASTIC AMAZING TRIVIA FACT: Both the keyboard player and drummer have facial hair. —Rev. Nørb (Crustacean)

MOJOMATICS:

***Nothin About Nothin*: 7"**

Sweet victory! A two-piece Venice (IT, not CA) band, mixing the can't-rattle-em-loose melodies and warmth of the Saints (if they were more acoustically based) to the raw throw-it-together-and-somehow-it-works-really-fucking-well vibe of Billy Childish, accompanied by a jouncing harmonica. They're incredibly catchy, joyous, and fun. I can see these guys easily appealing to

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garage purists (fans of Norton Records), Merseybeaters (okay, I'll admit it, although I'm not a fan: The Beatles), jamboree punks (Rumbleseat), and rippin' roots (Bassholes)—something I've never thought a band could be capable of before. Grab this one and see if you can find any of their back catalog. —Todd (Alien Snatch)

MOMENT, THE:

Showdown at the Discotheque: CD

Judging from the picture of the vaguely Mansonesque cowboy on the cover, I was expecting at best some manic hardcore and at worst grungy hillbilly punk. Sadly, they've chosen to marry the cover with some lousy modern hardcore/screamo crap. Ah well, listening to this was fitting punishment for my breaking my "any band that uses the word 'rock' in their web address to imply that they, indeed, rock probably doesn't and their efforts should be avoided like the Ebola virus" rule, because, to date, there has yet to be an exception to said rule. —Jimmy Alvarado (www.themomentrock.com)

MOMENT, THE:

Showdown at the Discotheque: CD

Well-produced and boring corporate-style screamo. This is the new glam metal; where do all these bands come from? Super slick keyboard flourishes, lifeless vocals and glossy everything, it's all here. A couple of songs even stretch out into electro dance punk. All the worst elements of current teenage music can be found right here. They play and scream well, but

man, where are the tunes? —Mike Frame (The Moment)

MONITORS: *Self-titled: 7"EP*

I'm no musician, and I don't play one on TV, but I think they're using the wrong end of the synthesizer, the side with all the high pitched keys. See, the vocals are all fuzzed-out and lindy and crazed and the guitars slash while the bass bounces like a car with bad shocks, which is all pretty rad, but then the synthesizer, which is front and center, sounds like it's backing a dancing fuzzball in a public service announcement between Sunday morning cartoons circa 1972. It just makes it odd because the rest is "Rust has rotted our circuit boards! We're robots on kill mode! Raar!" and the synthesizer is all "F is for Family. Let's all hug this problem out." I'm trying to like the Monitors, but it's just bugging me that the Care Bears have been let loose in their interpretation of Philip K. Dick's future. —Todd (Goodbye Boozy)

MUTANTS, THE:

Drunk Mambo Outtakes: 7"

Not to be confused with the old San Francisco band, these Mutants hailed from Finland and apparently specialized in organ-and-sax-fueled surf instrumental type stuff. They weren't bad at what they did, either. —Jimmy Alvarado (Wanton)

NAUSEA:

The Punk Terrorist Anthology Vol. 1: CD

I really don't remember too much about this band. I know there were two bands with the name Nausea around the

same period of the late '80s to early '90s. This was the East Coast band that had more notoriety and the other was based around Los Angeles. I know I have the *Lie Cycle 7"* but it has to be over ten years since I listened to that. I guess it didn't grab me on the first listen and got filed away. But after all this time, this does sound good to me: early crust that is heavily influenced by the Amebix. It's uncanny how much they sound like the Amebix on many of the songs. The additional female singer does change things up. Musically, they are interesting and shows that you can have musical abilities and still play punk. The songs are dark and ominous yet delivered with a precise dirge. The guitars are the centerpiece of the audio image. The drums slap back and forth with a rhythmic, driving force while the bass holds together the mood. No wonder I see so many patches of this band all around. I guess I just wasn't attentive enough to get it the first time. —Donofthedead (Alternative Tentacles)

utes. It was draining getting through their set. This band barely clocks any of their songs over three minutes. That's just about right. It's not a chore getting through this full length. —Donofthedead (Crimes Against Humanity)

NEUROTIC SWINGERS:

Sexy & Mysterious: CD

Uh, with regards to the song "I Killed Kennedy," to which Kennedy do you refer? By the looks of you lot, the oldest one of you were at best burping up Enfamil when Bobby was still breathing, and Teddi's still very much alive, as are TV goddess Jayne Kennedy and *Penitentiary* star Leon Isaac Kennedy. Last I checked, MTV host Kennedy had a pulse, although her career definitely seems moribund these days. In short, I'm perplexed and more than a little annoyed. Oh, and the whole "France's answer to the Briefs" shick ain't cuttin' it either, kids. —Jimmy Alvarado (Lollipop)

NEW BRUISES:

Transmit! Transmit!: CD

There's an element in here that I can't identify just yet. I hate to throw a bunch of band comparisons at a band I actually enjoy and encourage people to seek out since it's a really lazy way out but... Avail is in here, The Arrivals, Hot Water Music, Dillinger Four, and even Randy. I imagine a lot of people have been sold right there... but there's something else I can't put my finger on. Could be one of the bands these gents are/were in, including Mid Carson July, Grey AM, and The Holy Mountain but I haven't actually heard

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any of them to my recollection so I can't say. It's a good element though; feels a little like a band or two from Chicago... Maybe you'll figure it out. -Steve (Kiss Of Death)

NEW THRILL PARADE: Self-titled: 12" EP

Hmmmm. I still don't know if this thing has an actual title or not, and at first glance there are three distinct possibilities regarding what the name of the label might be. The music backs up that confusion. An included review describes the New Thrill Parade as "curious cacophony," and that would be an accurate summation. It's extremely experimental, and often it's hard to offer something truly compelling in such modes (and difficult to describe it, so I offer my apologies). This would say that this record is interesting; I didn't get sick of it at all, but nor would it be one that I would reach for when I didn't know what else to listen to. I suspect that live would be the preferable means of appreciating this, because start to finish it sounds like the recording of a performance art piece. —The Lord Kveldulfr (Mountain Landis)

NEW WINDS:

A Spirit Filled Revolution: CD & Book
Saw an interview with the singer of this band in a recent issue of *Last Words*, and he came across as totally genuine and totally on fire about the band and what they were trying to do. That same intensity translates onto this record; taking the foundations of melody that "melodic hardcore" bands like Boy Sets Fire laid down in the late '90s and expanding

on it with a direct, furious, and hopeful political approach, New Winds comes across exactly as what they are: an über-serious Portuguese straightedge band. Song topics are broad, and the songs are, thankfully, diverse enough to be able to discern from each other—they've obviously worked on allowing every instrument to carry equal weight in these tunes. Not only that, they've thrown the entire "bass—drums—guitar" regiment out the window by occasionally including stuff like didgeridoo, cello, and sitar on a few of the tracks. There are moments where the vocals (again, think Boy Sets Fire) were a little too sweet for me, a little too *sung*, and I really could've done without the last tune's overladen use of the aforementioned sitar, but as a whole, New Winds has put out an album full to the brim with a well-thought and pointed rage. There's a distinct sense that every element of every song is there for a reason—this is not one of those records where the band made some minor mistakes in the studio but decided to just stick with the take anyway. To top it off, what they've done in lieu of including a lyric booklet is to include an entire fucking 170-page book, complete with song lyrics and lengthy explanations, as well as tons and tons of writings from contributors and pages of contact information and resources (web and print) that people can check out if they find something that strikes a chord with them. Projects like this are amazing to me—the layout is rock-solid, the care is evident, and they're covering everything from profiling specific political prisoners to tackling the rough topic of

Palestine, to straightedge as an individual choice, to punk being about resistance in one form or another rather than seeing who has the sweater patch on their butt-flap. Have we heard it all before, in one form or another? Yeah, sure. Do we ever need to stop hearing about it? I don't think so; we need to be reminded sometimes of what we're capable of, as punks and as people. We need to work on constantly redefining ourselves and our intentions, and a package like this can undoubtedly serve as a catalyst to that for some people. And if the music isn't entirely my bag (and while it's definitely great for its genre, it's not a type of music I'm particularly interested in), New Winds deserves an ardent "thank you" for investing so much effort into this release, and the label for having the willingness to put it out. —Keith Rosson (Refuse)

NO VIOLENCE: Invencível: CD

Some most excellent Brazilian hardcore here—fast but not to the point of silliness, angry but intelligible, with lyrics that take a revolutionary stance against the failings of the modern world without sounding preachy. You gotta love it, man. This easily earns a place of honor on Jimmy's "January 2006 cool-as-fuck releases" list. —Jimmy Alvarado (Worleater)

NOFX: Cool and Unusual Punishment b/w Civil Defense: 7"

The eleventh installment of a twelve-part series, it took eleven months for a dim bulb to light above my head. What NOFX have essentially done is record

an album and a half—all the hits, misses, mistakes, and gems—and trickled them out in year's worth of 7"s instead of releasing them all in one big chunk. In the process, they got me to review each song individually. This one's really good. Side A's about a Japanese sex club (that involves sadomasochism and other things concerning genitalia, hair pulling, and wax). (NOFX really should make an instructional sex video.) The B side is an FU's cover. Hard to go wrong with that. (I'd love to hear a NOFX 7" EP of RKL covers.) —Todd (Fat)

NORTHERN LIBERTINES:

Secret Revolution: CD

Few things are more annoying than picking up a CD that purports to be "all things weird" and invokes the names Butthole Surfers and Sonic Youth but what comes out of your speakers when you plop it in sounds just like any other alt-rock combo. Hell, I could've been framing my cuticles or something with the time I wasted listening to this. —Jimmy Alvarado (Worleater)

ON THE OUTSIDE: Tragic Endings: CD

Some pretty standard, by-the-numbers youth crew hardcore. Sounds like a mix of most of the bands on Deathwish and Bridge 9. To their credit at least most of the songs are actually fast, but this just ain't my cuppa 'core. —Mike Frame (Thorp)

PANSY DIVISION:

The Essential Pansy Division: CD

Are you like me? Were you thinking this disc was just gonna be "Two Way Ass?" Okay, seriously... Pansy Division were

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some of my favorite (metaphorical!) whipping boys in the '90s, and i don't completely remember what the crux of the beef was, but i know it had something to do with them "not rocking." It was just like they would go out on stage and be like "Oh my god, WE'RE GAY!" and people were like "**OH MY GOD, THEY'RE GAY!!! THIS IS THE CRAZIEST, MOST OUTRAGEOUS THING EVER!!!**" I dunno. I didn't get it. Why is their being gay so fucking amazing??? Like, what, no one's ever seen a gay dude before? What the fuck are they, martians? It just seemed to me that they skated on a bunch of stuff (like their cover of the Undertones "Male Model"—my band at the time had covered [and released] said song, and we always had problems getting the four measures at the end right [NeeNeeNuhNuhNuhNuhNahNah, DeeDeeNuhNuhNuhNuhNuhNahNah, ReeNeeNuhNuhNuhNuhNuhNahNah, DeeDeeDoDoDuhDuhDahDuh DUNT! ...that part]. So this Undertones tribute album comes out, and, no, my band isn't on it, but here's Pansy Division doing our Undertones song, "Male Model!" We get the record and we put it on to hear how Pansy Division do that last four measures, because, if they really nail it, we're gonna be totally humiliated that we got our asses kicked at an Undertones song by friggin' Pansy Division, and it gets to the last four measures, and they just end the song cold—without ever even ATTEMPTING to play the hard part of the song! It was just like why bother attempting something challenging? Let's just go "WE'RE GAY!" [**"OH MY GAWD!!!**

THEY'RE GAY!!! THIS IS THE BEST UNDERTONES COVER EVER!!!]). I'm sorry, but if mediocre pop punk about boys having sex with boys constitutes an unbelievably radical throttling of your pre-existing world views, you gotta get OUT more, friend (hey, i said "out!"). I mean, most of their gay shtick is about one level above fart jokes. It's like a homosexual Beavis and Butt-head (actually, it isn't: If Pansy Division were Beavis and Butt-head, they'd raise their eyebrows and attempt to make lascivious comments every time somebody said "Butt" or "Head," so, technically, Pansy Division are actually one brow LOWER than Beavis and Butt-Head. Amazing. Actually, i'm kind of jealous). I mean, what if the Mentors did "Alpine Skiing?" The only thing that would prevent grand hue and cry from the feminist sector would be them deeming the band "too stupid" to bother with. BUT(T)! THAT SAID! Let the record show that, okay, i never actually sat and down and listened to a whole Pansy Division album before this. And i did not hate it. I kinda liked it, actually. It was oft-times funny and clever, with more trans-fart-joke content than i had historically given their work credit for. I think the problem isn't so much that they don't "rock" as that they're simply *not that good at playing pop punk* (it's a cunnilingus thing. You wouldn't understand)—the non-pop punk songs on here are almost uniformly GREAT ("No Protection" is an excellent dance tune, and the inbred country twang of "He Whipped My Ass In Tennis (Then I Fucked His Ass In Bed)" brings to mind visions of a gay Dr. Frank [wait, are you

telling me Dr. Frank is straight?]). And, of course, once i beheld the majesty of the "Bad Boyfriend" video—stuffed animals dancing in front of a record cover (sure, it doesn't sound funny now, but wait 'til the horns come in)—i capitulated to their *savoir faire*. AAAAand then the next video showed dudes with tattoos giving each other head and i was out of there (*memo to self: Collect Nob Dylan money from A/T before next lawsuit*). BEST SONG: "Luv Luv Luv" BEST SONG TITLE: "He Whipped My Ass In Tennis (Then I Fucked His Ass In Bed)" FANTASTIC AMAZING TRIVIA FACT: I think the cutest member is the bass player. —Rev. Nørø (Alternative Tentacles)

even sounds a bit like the faster, earlier Turbonegro, back before Death Punk died. Turds a-flyin', nut flapping, high-speed fun where all the songs sounding the same is definitely a good thing. Mixed by Frank E. Male of HFOS, so you know it'll curl your nosehairs. —Aphid Peewit (Rock Star)

RADAR STATION: *Spirit Of Desire*: CDEP

Swampy, messy garage rock from Finland. Maybe you've heard this before but not quite in this fashion. Title track sports some sax honking that Steve MacKay would approve of. "Feather" is a cool, driving track that ends with some cool guitar riffing. I would like to tell you more about these mysterious layabouts but their record site offers up precious few details and their band website has disintegrated into the ether. But if you approve of a band that would have a song on their record called "Satan's Piss," then more than likely you will dig Radar Station's pulses as they tap into your subconscious. —Sean Koepenick (Wanton)

RANDY: *Randy the Band*: CD

Fuck! My wife already hates that one room in our house is overflowing with records and CDs. So the last thing I need is another band to add to the collection. But no matter how many thrash shows I go to, I am a sucker for the melodic. I resisted this band even though others at Razorcake threw around accolades for this band. They even went on to put them on the cover of issue twenty and made them the featured interview. But, I stayed away partly because their releases never trickled down to me or I never

remembered to check them out. But the mighty people at Fat knew that they would be a great addition, even though they were a subtraction from Epitaph. So, with my hesitation still in mind, I pop the shiny disc into the computer and decide to check out the videos first. Let's see if I like this band with a little visual stimulation: hooked like a catfish with a designer lure. Three videos, one from the current release and two from the *Welfare Problems* LP. All three were excellent. Now I was ready to dive into the music. I listened all the way through without once pushing the fast forward button. This band has a real talent of not writing the same song twice. It's recorded with a great production but does not come off as squeaky clean. There is that underlying dirtiness to their songs that permeates through. It is the punch that makes the music feel alive and not sterile. The vocal interplay and harmonies are the bar raisers here and is the magic dust that makes you enjoy listening. I am giddy listening to this. Next in line is to fill out the collection with their entire catalog. —Donofthedead (Fat)

RANDY: *Randy the Band: CD*

I was suspicious of this record. Anything that pushes at my comfort levels makes me antsy. Here are the questions it posed: 1. "Do I have to buy better stereo equipment so I can hear all the sneaky bits?" 2. "Should I move so I crank this at 1 AM and not get evicted?" 3. "What is it about huge production that neuters most bands but makes Randy sound as big as three bands playing all at once hooked into a speaker stack as tall as the Mount Rushmore?"

Anyhow, one of my favorite bands has released another record that came with a little tube of superglue. It'll take quite a bit to pry it off my player. I don't want to compare them to any contemporaries. Randy's just great rock'n'roll, firmly rooted in punk that isn't afraid to stretch back to Chuck Berry, occasionally siphon Queen, and is unafraid to be campy once in awhile. Once again, they've come out with a clutch of heartfelt, smart, and witty songs that leave me giving thanks. —Todd (Fat)

REATARDS, THE: *Not Fucked Enough: CD*

For some reason or another, I seem to be one of the few people who didn't absolutely love Jay Reatard's stint with Lost Sounds. It wasn't so much because I couldn't stand the more subdued indie-goth of L.S., but more because I missed the full force Tourette syndrome spazz-out of the Reatards. As bands go, college radio darlings are a dime a dozen, but one that can out-budget rock the Mummies is a band worth losing brain cells over. Further more, anyone who doesn't think *Grown Up, Fucked Up* isn't one of the greatest snot rock records of all time really is a retard. But all is well now because the Reatards are back and I am full of dumb, drooling joy. This collection of songs from '98-'99 captures the classic Reatards' regurgitated school lunch sound. My only gripe about this recording is a minor one: "Your So Lewd," the snotty classic about young testicles in love from the 7" of the same name, is here in alternate form as "I Like Your Titty" and it doesn't have near the same chiding disso-

nance of the version I've grown so fond of. But they easily make up for that with lo-fi rummage explosions like "Make It Fit" and "Twice As Hard." And, of course, in keeping with grand Reatards tradition, it all sounds like it was recorded in a giant diaper pail. Hoo-wee! Good times is here again. The Reatards' music is, in the words of the Immortal Bard, "a tale told by an idiot, full of sound and fury, signifying nothing." Amen brother. —Aphid Peewit (Empty)

REATARDS: *Bedroom Disasters: CD*

The Reatards were a bright light in the rapidly darkening "garage" corner of punk, one of few later bands able to transcend the limitations and "rules" that turned the original idea into a pigeonhole and just tear shit up. Their songs were vitriolic yet tuneful, primal as hell, and stuffed to the gills with levels of raw teenage rage not seen since hardcore got co-opted by metalheads and sellouts. This collection of assorted out-of-print singles, unreleased covers (Eater, Angry Samoans, Freestone, Ramones and others are covered) and such should more than satisfy their fan base and act as a nice introductory point to the work of a band that deserves to be cranked to eleven anytime their music hits the player. —Jimmy Alvarado (Empty)

REFLECTORS / HISSY FIT: *Split: 7"*

Reflectors are snotty crust punk. The recording is super lo-fi and tinny sounding; a lot like many a band I have seen at basement shows. Sloppy political punk for fans of Naked Aggression or maybe the Gr'ups in their poppier

moments. Four songs on their side. Hissy Fit are sloppy, poppy punk in the vein of Plow United or Toys That Kill. Three songs on their side, better recorded, but still lo-fi. Very Creep Records sounding; they would have been hot shit with the pop punks ten years ago and probably touring with Weston or Super Hi Five. —Mike Frame (Bitter Like The Bean)

RINGERS: *Curses: CD*

I think others at the mag would have appreciated this band more than I. My moods change as much as I change underwear. I do like what I hear, though: straight-ahead punk that is melodic but raw. With a raw production, this comes off sounding live. What I hear are some parts Dillinger 4, One Man Army, and the Beltones; not exactly like those bands but taking small elements from them. The melody is the key here. While they do blaze through with fury, their art is the poppiness of the songs. —Donofthedead (1-2-3-4 Go!)

RINGERS: *Curses: CD*

I'm glad I came to hear this the way that I did. The CD was in my box, but I hadn't gotten a chance to listen to it when they came through town with Bent Outta Shape, playing something like four or five shows in one city in about a week. I'm not sure how much of a chance I would have given this if I popped it in with no outside impression. I think I may have written it off as decent, but nothing special, pop punk. Luckily, that wasn't the case. Live, they really impressed me. Catchy and driven. In person, they were super-nice, and

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their bass player has a tattoo of Slimer eating pizza, which earns points with me for some reason. So, after they'd been out of town for a few days, I put this on and gave it several listens. And then several more. It gets stuck in my head all the time. There are some real subtleties in there that grab me, but I think it's those subtleties that may have been what I would have overlooked. There's nothing that immediately jumps out as remarkable, but, with time and letting it get absorbed, there really is something there worth taking the time to find. -Megan (1-2-3-4 Go)

RIVERBOAT GAMBLERS, THE:

To the Confusion of Our Enemies: CD

For people reading this zine well versed in the Gamblers, I offer this caution: don't let the production throw you. Yes, it's huge. No, it doesn't sound exactly like *Something to Crow About*. Be patient and your rewards will be tenfold. For me, the Gamblers have pulled off a true rarity: they made a record that both sits neck and neck with their previous (one that many didn't think could be topped); one that is both immensely personal, yet poised for a larger audience. After hearing this about sixty times so far, I've developed this theory: this is two records played at once. It's two worlds, layered on top of one another. The obvious world: AC/DC. The inobvious world: Hickey, Rocket From The Crypt, Toys That Kill. The obvious: "Right! Right! Right! Hey! Hey! Hey!" stomp rock. The inobvious: Dude, this record's all about the loss of dead friends, the very real concerns of weighing artistic

integrity, and of love—both tender and fangy. The obvious: arena, tall speaker stacks, lightning bolts. The inobvious: bedrooms, sickness, lullabies, self-doubt, courage, and headphones. I can't think of the last record that seemed so touching to me on so many levels—these are gold-heart, long-running punk dudes playing revved-up rock'n'roll—that could be played on a worldwide stage. One of the best records of 2006. And it's February. Mark it. -Todd (Volcom)

ROCK N ROLL STORMTROOPERS:

On Fire: CD

Goddamn, this is F-U-N!! Catchy and rockin' mid tempo glam punk from this great German band. The first thing that hit me was that they sound a lot like early Vibrators: the guitar sound is pure Knox. Reminds me a little of their fellow Germans Hollywood Teasze at times as well, since both bands are fun without being goofy. This record has the most song title references to ROCK that I have heard since the classic *C'mon Let's Go* by Sweden's phenomenal Let's Go's. This band is obsessed with rock! My fav tune are "Keep Rock Clean" and "RNR Guitarman" which have a real cool Sweet meets Slade vibe and the slower "Waste My Time" which is a real cool Faces/Diamond Dogs style song. This grows on me more and more with every listen! These bulldozers on the loose are Ready To Rock and they're Gonna Rock You! You gotta Keep Rock Clean if ya know what I mean... -Mike Frame (Full Breach Kicks)

RYDELS: *Go Mental*: CD

I don't know how much I can get behind Ramones-derivative bands. Not the bands that happen to have a strong Ramones' influence in their music, but the bands that are not adding anything new to what Designated Dale's favorite boys already have done. Enter Rydels: the songs are catchy, pulled together well, but I'd really just rather listen to the Ramones. -Megan (Cheapskate)

SAGGER: *Self-titled*: 7"

Three songs, very stripped down and raw rock'n'roll. It's good, but nothing about it makes it stand out from a zillion other bands that have this sound. If you see it at the record store it might be good to pick up, but it's not something that you should put a lot of effort into finding. -The Lord Kveldulfr (Goodbye Boozy)

SAINTE CATHERINES / WHISKEY SUNDAY: Split 7"

I'm no math guy, but I think that the band, The Church Of The Saturday Morning Saints (reviewed elsewhere in this issue) features members of both these bands, since the dude's voice in the Sainte Catherines is so distinctive: swallowing nails while blowing smoke rings through a rough cloth. The Sainte Catherines also have that secret button that other bands can't seem to find: they can go from mellow, interesting acoustic-laced ballads into full-throttle, break-the-sky-with-guitars riffs anthems without compromising the heart of the first or the power of the second. Big stuff. Whiskey Sunday: This is all just a guess, but I hear a dis-

tant metal past meets the same approach as Altaira, which means they're earnest, love early Hot Water Music, and take time to let their songs breath between the words to let the notes soak—like beer and fine pharmaceuticals—into the listener's bloodstream. It feels very "brotherhood of the musical notes" and steers far from "dude, bro. Light beer. Bangin' chicks! Woo!" Strong split. -Todd (Vinehell)

SCARRED, THE/ VOID CONTROL: Split: 7"

The Scarred: Seem to remember liking a demo of theirs I got a while back, and I still dig 'em just fine. Two tunes of mid-tempo punk with a heavy early OC beach punk influence, which makes perfect sense considering that's exactly where they hail from. Good stuff. The Void Control: More mid-tempo stuff, nowhere near as catchy as the flip, but not exactly on a one-way trip to sucklandia, either. -Jimmy Alvarado (Puke N Vomit)

SET TO EXPLODE: *Self-titled*: CD

These guys specialize in a melding of the Minor Threat and Negative Approach strains of early '80s hardcore and they're quite good at it. Not too impressed with their lyrics, but I guess they're serviceable at worst and the tunes have the requisite rough execution. -Jimmy Alvarado (Grave Mistake)

SEVENONEFIVE:

We Don't Feel Like This for Free: CD

Sounds like the second coming of Good Riddance. Recording at the



Blasting Room only elevates my theory.
—Donofthedead (Crustacean)

SHELL SHOCK: Born to Kill: CD

Musically, this is some pretty strong, straightforward hardcore. Lyrically, things lean more toward the more personal "you pissed me off so I wrote a song" school of thought. Any larger political attitudes are a bit ambiguous, although they do openly question the validity of anarchism as a viable alternative to the current societal order. Not bad overall. —Jimmy Alvarado (Puke N Vomit)

SHOW ME THE PINK:

Velocipedomania: CDEP

New wave should be fun and at the same time sound weird because of the electronic sounds. This band never takes off to the party and come off as kind of arty. The pace of the songs are tedious and make the songs drag. The pictures of the band make them look fun, but what comes out of the speakers is a totally different picture.
—Donofthedead (Chainsaw)

SINKIN' SHIPS:

All Signs Are Wrong: CD

I should probably love this. They've got a song titled "Shit's Tight" for one thing. They also happen to have Mark Harpur, who is one of my favorite people from the far shores of Canadia (and proud representative of the Fast Crowd). He gave this to me at punk rock bowling, told me I'd hate it, and to rip it to shreds. He's wrong; I don't hate it. It's not necessarily my cup of the p-u-n-k, but I know a lot of people who like

this kind of stuff. I'm just not one of them except for some very rare occasions. Guitar-driven with dominating female vocals. —Megan (www.sinkinships.com, www.woundedpaw.com)

SKEPTICS, THE: Hearts & Spades: CD

Did I just throw up in my mouth and swallow again? How did this Hot Topic/MTV/Fuse band end up in my house? —Donofthedead (Third World Industries)

SKIP JENSEN: Abscond: CD

Montreal is way up there. There are several one man type bands from up that way right now. Something strange and unique is going on up in the French-speaking city. Blues. I would think there might be some more connection to Cajun music. It's interesting; I'm not sure what the driving force behind all this is, and that doesn't matter. What does matter, is if this is something that you should get your hands on? The answer is yes. Skip has another band that I know of, and that's the Demons Claws. Freakin' great stuff with that band as well. The point is that this is a good CD to get you into some other stuff and expand your horizons with. You know, learn some French, get across the border, head north, and listen to the foot shakin' jingles on this CD.
—Dandy (Delta Pop Music)

SMALL ARMS DEALER:

A Single Unifying Theory: CD

Giving the songs nifty titles does not adequately hide the fact that emo blows snail wee-wee. —Jimmy Alvarado (Deep Elm)

SODA POP KIDS: Write Home: CD

Hot damn! This full length by these Portland kids is smokin'! Killer poppy garage glam punk with a real Teenage Head vibe. Reminds me of my faves the Slash City Daggers in spots as well. Dig the piano as well as the doo-wop backing vocals. This band knows how to write songs! Any of you that dug that Time Flies LP will wanna be all over this; there is a real similar vibe. Also available on LP with different cover artwork. I can't pick a fave tune here because they are all fantastic, the sequencing is great, and this really flows well as an album. This is gonna get TONS of spins this year! —Mike Frame (Full Breach Kicks)

SOME GIRLS:

Heaven's Pregnant Teens: CD

Not as frenzied as their *The DNA Will Have It's Say EP* on GSL, but also not as contrived. While I enjoyed that outing (in a guilty-pleasure kinda way) I couldn't help but feel they were just kind of going through the motions; all of the dudes in this band are seasoned veterans of the screamo/noise scenes and it just seemed like they put the first five or six songs they came up with on that record. *Heaven's Pregnant Teens* has a few things going for it that the previous record didn't. For one, the lyrics are actually decipherable more than half the time and they've managed to create a record this time around that actually coheres—each song manages to seem reliant and dependent on the one that came before it. The end result is an album that manages to feel current but also harkens back to the day when this

shit was new and chaotic and crazy and fast as fuck, when bands like this were dismantling the foundation of hardcore and throwing it on its ear. No, there's no new ground being forged, but all the same it's a pretty nice visit to an old haunt. —Keith Rosson (Epitaph)

SPINOFFS: Street Rock Stars: CD

Some pretty strong punky pop with some pretty banal lyrics. —Jimmy Alvarado (Black Market)

SPIT ON YOUR GRAVE:

2005 Demo: CD-R

Burly Baltimore HC that, at its best, brings to mind early Paint It Black. It's a lot more tough guy/crew/stabbed-in-the-back than I go for, but the vocals are good and the playing is solid. We'll see what happens when they get a record out. They are teetering right on the line of being really good and getting lost in the pack of tough and burly East Coast hardcore. —Mike Frame (fightingchancemd@hotmail.com)

STEAMING WOLF PENIS: Assholes and Hand Grenades: CDEP

Silly-ass band name? Check. Short, rudimentary, yet strangely proficient songs with titles like "123456 Hamster," "Birth Certificate Blues," and "I Love 2 Watch U Explode"? Check. Lyrics like "I like chicken, you like panthers/Let's all dance like Danny Glover"? Check. Cover art that looks like it was drawn by a right-handed autistic kid using her left hand? Check. It's official, folks: Jimmy's got a new favorite band for the week. —Jimmy Alvarado (www.jerkbeast.com)

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STORMCROW: Self-titled: CDEP

Heavy metal with grumbly vocals that are not unlike how I've always envisioned King Diamond's tummy sounding when he gets hungry after a long day of worshipping Satan.
-Jimmy Alvarado (No Options)

SUICIDE BID:**This Is the Generation: CD**

Now that the ska-punk wave of the late '90s is long gone, the current wave of bands isn't coming out from under every rock in the universe. This London band reminds me of a mix of, say, The Specials, The Clash, Bad Manners, and The Four Skins. Apparently, this band was formed from the ashes of many bands that I personally never heard of, but their collective experience shows on this recording. They pull off the sound with precision and not one member is dragging the band behind. This easily could have come out in the early '80s and would have fit right in. -Donofthedead (Household Name)

SUZUKI SMITH: Wife Beater: CD-R

There's a bar in Seattle that sits beside the Space Needle that has changed hands many times and had many names. Many years ago that is where I was first introduced to "bar punk": thirty-five to forty-year-old dudes obsessed with the Mentors, writing lyrics that a fifteen-year-old with Downs Syndrome would call retarded. Suzuki Smith is bar punk. I

mean if your preferred lyrical content concerns the hotness of Jen Lindley from *Dawson's Creek* ("Jen Lindley, cute blondie, you're so hot, on that show... oh yeah, you know I'd do her!") and you like a band with a "Hottie of the Month" contest on its website then this is your jam right here... and you've never really heard "Anarchy in the U.K." until you've heard a fat dude from Boston belt it out from behind a goatee. -Steve (www.suzukismith.net)

SWIMS:**Ride of the Blueberry Winter: CD**

Neo-psych pop with more than an obvious nod toward their '60s predecessors, the result sometimes sounding like a weird Donovan/Elvis Costello hybrid, only sloppy. Not bad at all for what it is. The cover art is very "Yellow Submarine." -Jimmy Alvarado (Prison Jazz)

TERA MELOS: Self-titled: CD

God, I really don't know where to start. I think Refused was on this page when they recorded *The Shape of Punk to Come*, but this is jazzier and occasionally more melodic. This Sacramento band is four instruments, no vocals, no song titles, and still manages to make me think of Tortoise or avant-noise like Black Dice and Al Dimeola on speed and nitrous oxide. David Lynch might approve. If you enjoy being disoriented and thought nobody could

even attempt to match *The Shape of Punk to Come*, give this a spin! -Buttertooth (Springman)

TERRIBLE TWOS: Spitting Image: 7"

Imagine later Iggy and the Stooges (meaning longer songs with multiple parts, freak-outs, and proto punk that keeps its guitar licks equal with its sonic loopdey loops), rabid animals in noisy cages with bad locks, and the rusty car bodies and bald-tire desolation of Ann Arbor, Michigan. Then file it next to the Clone Defects and early Catholic Boys. Bits remind me of The Chargers Street Gang, too. I like it best when the pedal's down and the Beefheart-isms are tossed out the window, but individual tastes may differ. Not bad at all. -Todd (X!, www.x-recordings.com)

THIEVES AND ASSASSINS:**Self-titled: 7" EP**

An extremely strong debut, much akin to Strike Anywhere's *Chorus of One*. It's word-heavy, melodic hardcore—ganged up vocals, the buzzy-hummy quality of mid-period Bad Religion, and incorporates the making-musical-nooses knack of songwriting of prime Good Riddance. Yet, as is sometimes the case with debuts, I think they're trying to fit a bit too much into each song, and that lends a claustrophobic feeling to the EP as a whole, but it's definitely a band to watch in the future. -Todd (Iron Pier Recordings, www.mindsetoverhaul.com)

TOWERS OF HANOI: Black Feathers: CD

Mid-tempo punk, with Swiz-y guitars and some pretty atrocious female vocals. Not atrocious because they're female, but atrocious in that the vocals relentlessly dominate the recording. I think if this lady would just chill out a little and let the band play without howling over every note, I'd like this a lot more. She has a voice kinda like the woman from Life, But How To Live It. The notes are almost on, but not quite. Musically, I like this. It's a good band, they just need to sit down and have a talk with their singer. -Ben Snakepit (Barracuda Sound)

TRAINWRECK RIDERS:**Where the Neon Turns to Wood: CD**

I saw these guys play a few days after New Years in San Pedro: finger picking guitar, country-sounding, then heavy, not simple songs, but simple-sounding parts pulled together for a flavorful mix. It's actually pretty complex stuff, but it still has a homemade, sort of basic feel to it. I think it could be said that this is the type of music that might be made by someone with a busy life in the city; about their attempts at reconciling things within themselves and reaching out to the edge of the city, with all the complex angles of city life meeting with some notion or feeling of a more simple life on the outskirts. I don't think it's too much of a stretch to say if you like This Bike Is

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A Pipe Bomb or The Two Gallants, you'll be into this. —Dandy (www.trainwreckriders.com)

TUFF LUVS: *Heartburn: 7"*

Raw, mid-tempo, hooky—these guys have the whole Killed by Death thing pretty much sussed out. Would've sworn it was some punk obscurity from the late '70s Midwest if I hadn't read the press sheet. —Jimmy Alvarado (www.newartschool.net)

UNDER PRESSURE: Self-titled: CD

Solid, mid-tempo hardcore spare on metal riffage, which is a definite plus. —Jimmy Alvarado (Primitive Air Raid)

URGENCIES, THE: *Desolation Chic: CD*

Ummm...you cover the Plimsouls. The Plimsouls. C'mon now, this isn't karaoke night. —Megan (Bubble Empire)

VAGINA SORE JR:

Self-titled: 7-song 7" EP

Two parts Clairmel, and one part Russ of the Tim Version (who moves to bass and sings occasionally), it's melodic, mid-paced, working class, duct-taped Converse, fashionless Florida punk to a tee, which fans of the two aforementioned bands will like with ease. Add in a deep admiration for the Replacements and Radon, and you've got a 7" that gets a lot of

plays. It's not so flashy as it is satisfying and reaffirming. Song topics include being the band on a bill that no one came to see, moments of clarity during drunken brawls in the middle of the street (while taking an uppercut to the chin after unlocking a sleeper hold), and mourning the loss of a dog that was taunted by, then bit, a kid: "they docked my pay for the shot to end his life... why did you have to kill my dog?" Recommended. —Todd (Soooooo Intense / ADD)

VARIOUS ARTISTS:

Auto Glamour Sound: CD

Few things are sweeter than being introduced to something you missed the first time around. What was originally a double-seven-inch comp of Ohio art punk bands gets reissued on CD with a healthy chunk of additional tracks, for a total of twenty-three cuts, from Teddy And The Frat Girls, Qi-zz, Dementia Precox, 11,000 Switches, Spiritual Californians, Cointelpro, BPA, and Lopez Sophisticates. The music ranges from the funky to the truly odd, and virtually all of it holds up surprisingly well given the fact that it's over two decades old. Fans of "classic" bands like the Fried Abortions and more recent bands like Old Time Relijun will find much here worth their while. This'll find itself in a place of honor in the ol' record collection, right next to the Urinals, Savage Republic, and Keats Rides a Harley. —Jimmy Alvarado (Shake It)

VARIOUS ARTISTS: *Brainsick Volume 1: CD*

Four way metal/screamo comp featuring A Nightmare And A Cataclysm, And Bullets Fall, Codes of Silence, and Deep 13. The Agent Orange cover song was cool. But I think Donoftheaddead might have liked this more than I did. —Mr.Z (Eugene)

VARIOUS ARTISTS:

Diggy Diggy Dead!: 2 x CD

There's some good stuff here by some relatively known names—a couple of live Dicks tracks, and some tunes by the Dead Bros., The Deadites, Derita Sisters, Reverend Beat-Man, and the Vectors to name a few—and there's a lot of ground covered over the course of two discs—from Austin punk to Japanese '60s slop to Polish hardcore—but the dearth of band information is more than a little exasperating. I mean, are the Dicks tracks of recent vintage? Is Dennis Most's cover of "Psychotic Reaction" a new recording? Who are all these Texas bands on here and are they even together anymore? Call me anal retentive, but I like to know a little about what I'm listening to. —Jimmy Alvarado (www.rubblerecords.com)

VARIOUS ARTISTS: *If It Ain't Cheap, It Ain't Punk: CD*

A wildly diverse comp here, with punk, country, and points between making appearances over the course of its fifty-eight-minute running time, courtesy of a community of

bands including This Bike Is A Pipe Bomb, The Sissies, Ghost Mice, Shotwell, and a host of others. Although I profess I ain't much of a fan of a large swath of what's on here—what can I say, it just ain't my bag—I do respect the DIY attitude and camaraderie of their efforts, which are infinitely more "punk" than the work of many others claiming that title these days. —Jimmy Alvarado (Plan-It X)

VARIOUS ARTISTS:

Pirates Press Box Set: 6 x 7"

Hey, the shit's gonna blow up no matter what I say. With a lineup that consists of The Generators, Bouncing Souls, Street Brats, Lucky Stiffs, The Skels, Riverboat Gamblers, The Ratchets, Black Romeos, The Pervz, The Explosion, The Sore Thumbs, and Armed Suspects, and everything being packaged in tattoo-flash styled sleeves and each record having totally different, totally wacky colored vinyl, this box set is, I imagine, gonna be moving some units. Like most comps, it's a little spotty in some places (the Bouncing Souls, for example, contribute one not-so-good song and one song from their first BYO LP that came out about twelve years ago, and the Skels' Dropkick Murphys-styled drunk punk has become a little tiresome to me over the past few years) but the majority of these bands have definitely got some electricity walking

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up their backbones. Riverboat Gamblers fucking *smoke* with two songs that sound like the Humpers on a meth binge, The Ratchets' songs could've come from a long-lost Stiff Little Fingers session and both The Armed Suspects and The Generators brands of '77-style punk had me singing along by the first chorus. Generally, I think the whole tattoo-culture appropriation in punk over the past few years has become pretty played out and boring, but some of the vinyl here *does* looks pretty amazing. And sonically speaking, there are some fucking flat-out stunners on here. Quite a few of these splits have gotten and will continue to get some pretty consistent playing time around these parts. —Keith Rosson (Pirate Press)

VARIOUS ARTISTS: *Rather See You Dead: 7"*

I'm assuming this is a reissue of this comp, which originally saw the light of day about a decade ago. It features three of Houston's earliest and most celebrated punk bands—Really Red, The Hates, and Legionnaires Disease—cranking out four tunes that I'm figuring aren't available elsewhere (well, the Hates track is exclusive, at the very least) and date no later than 1979. Do I really need to tell you that this, in all its orange vinyl glory, is one smoking slab of punk rock history screaming to be played

at maximum volume? I didn't think so. —Jimmy Alvarado (Hotbox)

VARIOUS ARTISTS: *Strata—A Young Person's Guide to Experimental Music: CD*

The songs on this sampler range from pretty cool to pretty out there. HEY!!! Bizzart, and the experimental hip-hop kid who opened up for Buck when they played their last show on Cinco De Mayo 2005 in Long Beach, is on here! NICE. —Mr. Z (Sounds Are Active)

VARIOUS ARTISTS: *The Ugly Truth About Blackpool, Volume One: CD*

Twenty-seven songs covering 1977-2005 in Blackpool, England. Starting with 1977 Skrewdriver and going up through Sick 56 in 2005. The Skrewdriver song is good, but I will still reach for Cocksparrer any day for great listening and no sketch factor. Zyklon B, Male Models, Tunnel Vision, and Syntax all turn in decent post punk tunes and the songs seem to go on up with early '80s street punk/oi from Antisocial, Fits, and Take Lindy Surfing. All types of punk are represented here over the years but my fave tunes were by Shrink with their power pop sound and Razor Dog with their pop punk sound from 2004. —Mike Frame (JSNTGM)

VEX: *New Words for an Old Revolution: 7"*

Two demos dating back to 1983-84 finally from this old Houston punk

band get a proper release. First side is kinda plodding with politically oriented lyrics, but the second side is much tighter and catchier with pretty much the same lyrical content. Not bad. —Jimmy Alvarado (Hotbox)

VIOCIOS, THE: *Suicidal Generation: 7"*

Simple, catchy, straightforward punk rock —Jimmy Alvarado (Wasted Sounds)

VULTURES, THE: *Self-titled: CD*

Adequate musicianship and a decent, though obvious, selection of cover tunes (Misfits, Sonics, the Shondells), but this is somehow still about as grating and devoid of purpose as Pat Boone covering Slayer's "Altar of Sacrifice." —Jimmy Alvarado (www.bigmuddyrecords.com)

WE MARCH: *The Madness Ends Here: CD*

We March are a little harder to pin down than your average punk band. Sure, they plunder early American hardcore with the same deftness as bands like The Regulations, and they can no doubt lay waste to a crowd with the best of 'em (these guys on a double bill with the aforementioned Regulations would be one dangerous place to find oneself, indeed), but if you listen a bit closer, you can hear little bits of other styles mooshed into the batter as

well—a teensy bit of MC5 here, a weensy bit of the Germs there, a tweensy smidge of the Voidoids, and maybe even some of the Cows' chaos clinging to the edge of the bowl—giving you much more to marvel at. None of this means jack diddly if your sole intention is to use this disc to blast holes through the wall via your home stereo—and trust me, this CD will indeed be one fucking sweet addition to your permanent playlist—but if you're feeling the urge to pick apart its layers while torturing the neighborhood, you might be surprised by what you hear buried under all that racket. Recommended? You bet your ass it is, kiddo. —Jimmy Alvarado (non-prophetltd@hotmail.com)

WHISKEY & CO.: *Leaving the Nightlife: CD*

Bear with me on this one. If Natalie Merchant and that one chick from the Dixie Chicks mixed their voices and sang over more traditional country with a hint of the alt. instead of the opposite, you'd have Whiskey & Co. And it's good. It's so good. She sings so easily, which is a nice reprise from all the over-the-top forced virtuosos that seem to be gaining popularity lately. The music complements her voice (or maybe it's the other way around) perfectly with nothing sounding forced. The songs seem to come from an earlier time: the naturalness of them makes each feel like each is

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tied to a memory from years back. Songs of heartbreak, songs of drinking, songs that you'd sing with friends after the bars have closed and you're trying to make that last twelve pack carry through another hour. -Megan (No Idea)

WILL TO LIVE: *Tested and True*: CD

Some pretty decent Pantera/Lamb Of God style aggro metal from this Texas band. The first song was not good and had me thinking I was in for some boring, slow, floorpunch crap. But once they step on the gas they really nail it. This is better than most of the stuff on the Century Media or Roadrunner roster but not something I am gonna reach over my Shadows Fall records to pull off the shelf. —Mike Frame (Spook City)

XYILE / BRAND BLAND / PATTERN OF ANALYSIS: *Split: 3"* CD

Three-way-split noise CD on this little 3" disc. Xyile are industrial noise on their two songs. Brand Bland are pretty cool punky noise in a Screamers meets X Ray Spex kind of way. I definitely dug their four songs the most on this disc by far. Pattern Of Analysis are kinda grindcore and kinda noise with super guttural death metal vocals. —Mike Frame (Frank Ross)

YOUNG CANADIANS:

No Escape: CD

The Young Canadians were one of the early groups to make a bit of a

splash in the fledgling Canadian punk scene. Their best known track, "Hawaii," has been booted a number of times, but as evidenced by this collection, was not their sole output. Joey Shithead's record label has seen fit to collect the band's three EPs, their track from the *Vancouver Complication* comp (when they were still known as the K-Tels), and a slew of unreleased live tracks for public consumption, a move which, frankly, absolves him of nearly all of DOA's missteps (sorry, but that band's whole "metal" period still ain't quite wiped clean). Musically, these boys leaned toward the poppier end of the spectrum, preferring cynicism and edgy, finely crafted rock to screaming and playing a thousand miles per hour. The studio tracks are, of course, excellent, and the live tracks—ten additional tracks that are wholly different tunes from the studio tracks that precede them—are just as friggin' good. Nice to see another band get some well-deserved attention. —Jimmy Alvarado (Sudden Death)

If stuff's going to plan, we'll have a fully searchable database of record reviews up on our website in the next couple of months. Be a little patient, though, because we've done about 10,000 reviews in the last five years.

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Bryan Souder was wearing a helmet but failing without.

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to bands and labels that were reviewed either in this issue
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- **ADD**, PO Box 8240, Tampa, FL 33674
- **Alien Snatch**, Mörkeweg 1, 74199 Untergruppenbach, Germany
- **Alternative Tentacles**, PO Box 419092, SF, CA 94141-9092
- **Arkam**, 1925 Hwy. 69 South, Savannah, TN 38372
- **Aversions, The**, 889 Richelieu #3, Québec, G1R 1L1, Canada
- **Barracuda Sound**, PO Box 11194 Gainesville, FL 32604
- **Beer City**, PO Box 26035, Milwaukee, WI 53226-0035
- **Bitter Like the Bean**, PO Box 34675, Philadelphia, PA 19106
- **Black Hats, The**, 623 E. Russell Ave., Milwaukee, WI 53207
- **Black Market**, PO Box 78046, Vancouver, BC Canada V5N 5W1
- **Blackout**, www.blackoutrecords.com
- **Blind Spot**, PMB 697, Portland, OR 97206
- **Bombshells, The**, PO Box 3361, Burbank, CA 91508-3361
- **Bubble Empire**, www.bubbleempirerecordings.com
- **Buddyhead**, PO Box 1268, Hollywood, CA 90078
- **Cantaloupe Music**, 80 Hanson Place, Ste. 702, Brooklyn, NY 11217
- **Chainsaw**, PO Box 11384, Portland, OR 97211
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- **Crimes Against Humanity**, PO Box 1421, Eau Claire, WI 54702
- **Criminal IQ**, 3540 N. Southport, Chicago, IL 60657
- **Crustacean**, PO Box 829, Madison, WI 53701
- **Dead Beat**, PO Box 283, LA, CA 90078,
- **Deep Elm**, PO Box 5260, Clover, SC 29710
- **Delta Pop Music**, 663 S. Bernardo Ave., Ste. 113, Sunnyvale, CA 94087
- **Deranged**, c/o Gordon Dufresne, 1166 Chaster Rd., Gibsons, BC, V0N 1V4, Canada
- **Detroit Noise**, 1217 Griswold, Detroit, MI 48226

- **Doubling Cube**, PO Box 1855, Radio City Station, NY, NY 10019
- **Dr. Strange**, PO Box 1058, Alta Loma, CA 91701
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- **Iron Pier**, www.mindsetoverhaul.com
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- **Moment, The**, 5316 Arbutus Road, Rockford, IL 61107
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- **Suburban Noize**, 1317 N. San Fernando Blvd. #385, Burbank, CA 91504-4272
- **Sudden Death**, Cascades, PO Box 43001, Burnaby, BC, Canada V5G 3H0
- **Super Secret**, PO Box 1585, Austin, TX 78767
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Send all zines for review to Razorcake, PO Box 42129, LA, CA 90042. Please include a contact address, the number of pages, the price, and whether or not you accept trades.



A. CRIMES Postcard Zine #1, Free. This is the most wonderful zine I've read in a long time. And it only has one entry. That's how rad it is. It is literally a postcard with a pretty cool picture on one side and a lil' story on the back and then the spot for the addy. So simple, yet so brilliant. And I appear to be only one of twelve to have ever seen this. Fuckin A if I don't feel honored. Email them for the newest issue TODAY! You won't regret getting these in the mail! I promise. -Mr. Z (acrimes@gmail.com)

AK INK #18, \$1 or trade, 7" x 9", 20 pgs.

It's like an *MRR* scene report of Anchorage... only it's 20 pages long and includes show, album, and DVD reviews. Truthfully, this zine confuses me. Well, either I'm confused or the zine writers are... because they say some fucking weird shit in here. Not Skinny Puppy weird. Not Nardwuar weird. But Fantastic Planet weird. For example, one of the reviewers says this about the CD he's just listened to (mind you, this is verbatim) "The most incredible thing about this band is after the first few notes you completely forget that the band is fronted by a female who can probably shout faster and harder than most so-called punk bands who tend to cry and whine all over their songs." Call *ME* weird, but I have no friggen clue what the hell that means or is supposed to mean. Not a clue. Oh yeah... and when did "dorking" someone become synonymous with fucking them? -Mr. Z (Jenn, PO Box 244235, Anchorage, AK 99524)

BIG TAKEOVER, THE, #57, \$5.99, 8½" x 11"

If anybody out there has the money, inclination, and resources to put out an encyclopedia of music (just imagine *The Trouser Press Guide to Recorded Music* or something like that), they oughta pay Jack Rabid from *The Big Takeover* to be a part of it. I'm always amazed when I read an issue of this magazine, just because no matter what type of music he's talking about, he's completely on top of his shit. His knowledge and enthу-

siasm for music are limitless, and the fact that, even after twenty-five years of being entrenched in underground music, he's still actively searching for new bands that turn his crank is nothing short of inspirational. I'll say this: if you like *Razorcake*—not necessarily the music itself, but the idea that music goes much deeper than what's sold to you at the mall—then you'll probably find a lot to like about *The Big Takeover*, too. -Josh (Big Takeover, 249 Eldridge St. #14, NY, NY 10002)

CELEBRITY PETS #1, \$?, 5.5" x 8.5", copied, 16 pgs.

Short zine that definitely runs into some of the pitfalls of a standard first issue. Cut and paste layout, eye-watering fonts. Short interviews with the Unlovelies, the Vamps, Dan Pothast (of MU330) and someone from a music management firm, and very little else. Hopefully they'll include a bit more content when and if they make it to a second issue. -Keith Rosson (Celebrity Pets, PO Box 28211, Fresno, CA 93729)

CITIZINE #10, \$3.25, 8 ½" x 11", glossy black and white cover, 48 pgs. *Citizine* never disappoints. From insightful commentary on politics and the so-called war on terror, to great interviews (Henry Rollins, Chuck Dukowski, Billy Zoom), and with more reviews than you can shake your dick at, this issue is jam packed with quality. They've also got some poetry, lots of photos, and an astrology page. How you gonna beat that? Best of all, it's actually well written and printed in an easy-to-read format. As good as it gets. -Brian Mosher (Citizine, 2513 West Fourth St., LA, CA 90057, citizine@citizinemag.com)

DARLENE ROCK'N'ROLL FANZINE #3, 4 ¼" x 5 ½", photocopied and stapled, 30 pgs.

The main idea of this one is that Randy Spaghetti believes that Slayer are the greatest band in history. And this is more than just a passing thought. He believes it with total conviction, to the point that he has trouble spending time with people who

have other favorite bands. He also likes The Melvins, Karp, The Whip, The Accused, and Jeff Mason. He's got a certain flair for caricatures and simple sketches, but his writing is a bit over the top. If you're a fan of Midwestern "heavy" music, you might want to check it out. -Brian Mosher (darlenezine@yahoo.com)

DUDES MAG, #7, \$5, 8½" x 11" I'll assume that no one out there really needs me to tell them just how bombsquad this magazine is, how it's better than corndogs and horse racing combined, how you should never ever use somebody's bathroom unless they've got a copy of *Dudes Mag* within arm's reach. Or at least I hope nobody needs me to tell them that. -Josh (Dudes Magazine, 714 Zeiss Ave., Lemay, MO 63125)

GREEN ANARCHY #21, \$4, 8 ½" x 11", newsprint, 84 pgs. The subtitle is "An Anti-Civilization Journal of Theory and Action", which is a very accurate description. *Green Anarchy* is a political zine produced by a group of idealistic anarchists. It's as much a how-to manual as anything, with articles bearing titles like, "Practical Rewilding: On Coming to Know Flesh," "Ecological Resistance," "Some Notes on the Social Construction of Reality," and "Binary Gender Division and Dualistic Thought." It's all surprisingly accessible, though, and not nearly as crazy sounding as you might think. If nothing else it, provides and interesting glimpse into a group of people who are actually putting their ideals into action. -Brian Mosher (Green Anarchy, PO Box 11331, Eugene, OR 97440, collective@greenanarchy.org)

NEW SCHEME, THE #13, Free, 8 ½" x 11", newsprint, 48 pgs. My first thought is: there are a ton of advertisements in this thing. Of course, it is free, so I guess that makes sense. But it's still kind of annoying. On the up side, there are also a ton of well-written and interesting reviews and interviews. A wide variety of styles are covered, too, from hardcore to indie pop.

"THE MAIN IDEA OF THIS ONE IS THAT RANDY SPAGHETTI BELIEVES THAT SLAYER ARE THE GREATEST BAND IN HISTORY."

-DARLENE ROCK'N'ROLL FANZINE

Featured bands include: The Medications, The Life and Times, Nedelle, This Is Hell, Achilles, and New Electric. -Brian Mosher (New Scheme Publishing Concern, PO Box 7542, Boulder, CO 80306-7542, www.thenewscheme.com)

NOSE KNOWS, THE #41, \$?, 3" x 4", copied, 4 pgs.

I'd be pretty hard-pressed to call this a zine, since it's just two pieces of double-sided paper folded into quarters. It consists of a fair amount of inside jokes and nonsensical comics, which probably means that they made about twenty copies, gave them out to their friends when said friends came over to the house, sent a few off for review for shits and giggles, but mostly wound up forgetting them in jacket pockets or under stacks of other zines on their coffee table. Weird to say, but the piece with the most substance here is a person-by-person recollection of a pb&j sandwich-eating contest. Pretty cute overall, but it's also one of those things that you're really not sure where you should put after you've read it; it's not substantial enough to keep, but you feel like you're throwing a friend's letter away if you recycle it. -Keith Rosson (T.N.K., 530 S. Clinton, Iowa City, IA 52240)

NOSE KNOWS, THE #45, \$?, 3" x 4", copied, 2 pgs.

Even shorter than the previous issue they sent in for review, this one's just a sheet of double-sided paper. Reminds me a lot of what *Chumpire* has done for a few hundred issues now: just very short, to-the-point writings regarding what's been going on in the editors' lives since the previous issue. This one's got notations regarding one woman's visit to Brazil and another woman's thoughts on life in the Midwest versus her native New York. I wouldn't mind seeing an issue with a higher page count some day, but as it stands now, these things read more like short, fairly creative letters from friends filling you in on what they've been up to recently. -Keith Rosson (T.N.K., 530 S. Clinton, Iowa City, IA 52240)

**NOWHERE TO PARK, \$?,
5.5" x 8.5", copied, 44 pgs.**

I'm not really sure what the deal is, but I found myself enjoying this thing immensely. And I don't really know why—by all accounts, it's a pretty standard "perzine" that stumbles over a lot of the same problems that many zines of this ilk do. It's nearly all text, with the few graphics consisting mostly of highly pixelated black and white photos that are oftentimes indistinguishable. There seems to be the occasional word missing from every few sentences, and more than a few typos. And the content gravitates, for the most part, around this guy's romantic difficulties. These are all things that generally, as a bitter and jaded zine nerd (the worst kind), would drive me batshit. But this guy's got the ability to transcend all of those by the simple fact that he's written a really terrific, captivating story of his summer. I read it in one sitting, which is pretty much unheard of for me these days. Starting in Seattle, winding up through various locales in Oklahoma and even Europe, it manages to avoid the *Cometbus*-worshipping romanticization of misery that so many travel zines tend to emulate; Johnny's own and singular voice shines bright here, and I really found myself rooting for him throughout all of his travails. If nothing else, this zine was written by a guy who goes to a gay bar dressed in a plastic skirt, manages to inadvertently pick up a straight woman and have awkward and terrible sex in a garage at his friends' house, with all the requisite next-day self-loathing. What's not to like, right? Apparently it's been about two or three years between the last issue and this one. Here's hoping his publication dates start to get a bit more frequent, because I enjoyed the hell out of this one. —Keith Rosson (Johnny, 6335 S. 72nd E. Ave., Tulsa, OK 74133)

**OH NO! THE ROBOT #7,
\$2, 5.5" x 8.5", copied, 36 pgs.**

This issue of *ON/TR!* apparently chronicles one day of the author's life, so it's factual, but he's gone ahead and written it from the perspective of himself *and* a few other people, so there's a fictional element to it as well. Unfortunately, the execution just didn't seem to work out that well. The dude's writing is a little stilted towards the detail-oriented, which generally makes it more like you're trudging rather than plowing through the zine. An excerpt: "Need a friend?" came a voice that purred as much as it hissed. Lost in my own world, my motor functions fizzled and flailed. The front tire of the bike buckled and then chose a direction that, unfortunately, did not match my own trajectory... my immediate reaction was one of gory violence... Blood pounding in my head, my hands crumpled into skinny balls of rage, I struggled to align myself and

mite out vengeance to my would-be attacker..." Anyway, there's some accidents, vehicular and otherwise, plenty of booze, blood, hospital visits, some prescriptions pills, and even some of the wacky weed bouncing around in this story. But for all of that, the whole thing read kind of cold and detached. I understand that the author is probably shooting for a tone of clinical offhandedness here with his writing, but the majority of it just came across as self-conscious. Overall, I had a hard time holding interest in this one, but another reviewer, for all I know, may have loved the shit out of it. If the guy tried to go for a more direct approach and pruned at least some of the lengthier paragraphs a bit, I think this one would've read a lot smoother. —Keith Rosson (Chris Morin, 829 Main St., Saskatoon, SK, S7H 0K2, Canada)

PROUD DISGRACE #4, \$2.00, 8 1/2" x 11", photocopied and stapled in one corner, 22 pgs.

This is an old school, handmade zine from a guy who's been around long enough to know how to do it. Mostly typed, but with some handwritten, with all the photos obviously cut and pasted into place. Articles include a retrospective on the author's defunct glam-punk band The Dimestore Haloes, a one paragraph bio of The Buzzcocks, a profile of The Pagans, and a number of other rants, reviews, and essays by the one and only Jimmy Reject. If you're more interested in the punk ethic than in English major-quality writing, you should get in touch with this guy. —Brian Mosher (Jimmy Reject/Blueboy Productions, 4 Fox Run #1, Marshfield, MA 02050)

**PROUD DISGRACE #5,
\$2, 8.5"x 11", 16 pgs.**

A collection of horrid short stories (sidenote for skim-readers: HORRID, not horror) by folks who have no regard for plot, grammar, reality, nor maturity. There is not one mediocre or almost great story in the entire zine. I hate to say this, really I do, but none of these authors even get an A for effort. This all reads like pre-teens who have been watching too much *A Clockwork Orange* and MTV for their own good. It all reads like what you would read on a gothic punk kid's short story blog. And, by kid, I mean no older than sixth or seventh grade. Lo and behold... all I had to do was read the intro to find the evidence to my claims: "...me and my whacked-out friends are always sharing our writings with each other on myspace and such. I figured I'd consolidate some of that stuff..." No need to carry on with the rest of the run-on sentence as I've already made my point. MYSPACE!!! Shit... Can you believe that Tom fucker just felt like making a record label and now it's distro'd by Universal? What a cocky

cock. Universal? That's poppy cock! Poopy cooooook! What a website, what a zine... what a waste of time... THE LOT OF EM! —Mr. Z (Blueboy Productions, 4 Fox Run #1, Marshfield, MA 02050)

RE/FUSE #4,

\$6.00, tabloid size (A3), 32 pgs.

RE/fuse comes from Holland, but the contributing writers are from all over the world, so you get a lot of different styles and perspectives, which is nice. The price is kind of steep, but if you're in Europe you can pick it up for two euros. This issue contains interviews with Ian MacKaye, Mike Kirsch, The Je Ne Sais Quoi, Look Back and Laugh, The National Anthems, Shikari, and Soft Pink Truth, stories about artist Thomas Hirschhorn and an article on DIY silk-screening, a bunch of photos, a whole big bunch of reviews, and some posters to stick to your wall. Not bad at all. —Brian Mosher (RE/fuse, Hertogstraat 17a, 6828 ER Arnhem, The Netherlands, Refuse_fanzine@hotmail.com, www.refusefanzine.com)

**RISE AND FALL OF THE
HARBOR AREA, THE #6,
\$2, 5.5" x 8.5", offset, 56 pgs.**

Pretty much quality from start to finish. It's a geographically centered zine (which is damn hard to pull off) coming from the L.A./San Pedro area. All I knew about San Pedro before reading this zine could be summed up by two things: it's where Recess Records is based out of and it's where Bukowski eventually moved once he started to actually make some money. What I've since been informed of after reading this issue of *TRAFOFHA*: not only was there a shitload of punk history being forged there "back in the day," the scene is still pretty vibrant and kicking. Contains interviews with Saccharine Trust, the Faction (previously unpublished, from 1985!), activist Chris Venn of the San Pedro Neighbors for Peace and Justice (an active anti-war demonstration outfit that's putting on weekly demonstrations against the war), the Evens, and the Knockout Pills. Also features poetry by Charles Bukowski (actually reprinted with permission!), profiles on tons of local skate spots, contests and skaters, show and record reviews, and a few more-than-decent comics. Closes out with some really generous memoriams of Randy Turner (Big Boys) and Steve Jensen (Vandals). All told, this thing should serve as a template for those that are going to go the "I'm doing this zine exclusively on the computer" route; it looks tight as hell, the composition is great, the photos are crisp as shit. There's hardly any typos. The content is varied, but the writing's totally consistent and there's hardly any filler whatsoever. And it's apparently absolutely free if you roll across it in the L.A. area. L.A.-centric or not,

this thing is definitely one of the more quality zines I've come across in a long time. If you run across it free, consider yourself lucky. And if you live in Semoqua, Wisconsin, hit these guys up with two bucks, quick. —Keith Rosson (*The Rise And Fall*, PO Box 1794, San Pedro, CA 90733)

**RISE AND FALL OF THE
HARBOR AREA, THE, #6, free if**

you can find it, 5 1/2" x 8 1/2"

Rad zine documenting what's going on in San Pedro, one of the few places—maybe even the only place—in Los Angeles where you don't feel like you're walking around in some crappy music video all the time. And that's one of the reasons why I like *The Rise and the Fall* so much: when they talk about what's going on in their town, it doesn't seem like they're trying to impress anybody. Sure, they're proud of what they're doing, but it also seems very encouraging, like, "You could do this, too." A lot of the old SST ethic permeates *The Rise and the Fall*, too—people working hard and creating something out of love instead of money or ambition. Not only the best free zine in L.A., but one of the best zines around, period. —Josh (*Rise and the Fall*, PO Box 1794, San Pedro, CA 90733)

SKYSCRAPER #20,

\$4.99, 8.5" x 11", offset, 140 pgs.

Could be considered a fancier version of *Razorcake* for the indie rock circuit. While the mag you're reading now is stylistically and aesthetically made up of empty beer bottles and duct tape (and that is a high compliment around here), *Skyscraper*'s psychic makeup seems to consist mostly of neckbeards, fuzzy sweaters, and reading glasses. They've certainly got their formula down: the layout's clean, readable and consistent, but this is also the mag's downfall—there's just no seeming threat or passion present at all. The writing is straight-up rock journalism, the design is neutered and flaccid, and the coverage is made up of bands that, frankly, I couldn't care less about. However, if you're into reading *Rolling Stone*-style exposés on bands like Pelican, Old Time Relijun, Deerhoof, and Modey Lemon, you'll be stuffing this thing in your messenger bag like a motherfucker. The rest of us, however, should probably stick with emptying those beer bottles and duct-taping Todd's cast. —Keith Rosson (*Skyscraper*, PO Box 4432, Boulder, CO 80306)

SUSPECT DEVICE #46,

\$?, 5.5" x 8.5", copied, 68 pgs.

More than anything else, *Suspect Device* serves as a testament to the fact that by no means do you have to even consider hanging up the leather jacket or hiding the Reagan Youth or Battalion Of Saints LPs once you start to sprout a few gray hairs; while the dudes putting this thing out are

obviously immersed in the whole career-marriage-children deal, it's just as obvious that their love for punk, new and old, hasn't waned in the slightest. The zine's obviously been around for a while, but the surprising thing is that even at issue forty-six, there really isn't a lot of filler here. There's plenty of columns, editorials, band interviews (Paint It Black, The Varukers, Fighting Shit, The Fire Still Burns, etc.) and the requisite record and zine reviews. A heavy page count with plenty of small type, and they've already gotten past a lot of the literary pitfalls that younger zines succumb to. My only complaint is that the layout is a little stiff, being entirely created in some page layout program or another. But that's really a pretty minor complaint—overall, I totally back this zine and can only hope that I've still retained as much passion and verve for the old p-rock as these guys do when I reach their age. Nice work, gentlemen. —Keith Rosson (Suspect Device, PO Box 295, Southampton, SO17 1HW, England)

TAG, YOU'RE GOD!,

\$?, 5.5" x 8.5", copied, 48 pgs. So *TYG!* is a tour diary regarding this kid and his one man band, Moogdish; he apparently plays a bass along with some sort of programmable beatbox and, judging by the photos, screams a lot and flails around. His writing's pretty straight forward, as if it really was culled right from his diary, and he

seems like a generally nice guy, if a little girl-obsessed. He pretty much gets crushed out on every girl he meets on tour, leaves town to go to the next show, and gets crushed out on another one. This goes on and on. Best part of the zine, and a pretty good example content-wise of what you're going to get here: "Anyways, I just washed my hands because an hour ago I put a baby carrot in my mouth and I realized that my right index finger smelt like poo. This explains something. Maybe. A little after midnight I was kissing a girl named Naomi in Cheyenne. I put my hand on her face and a few seconds later she said that I'd better get going. Did my finger smell then and I disgusted her with it? Possibly. It's also possible that she was just saying that because I had said that I'd better get going earlier, or that my personality was what disgusted her, not my hygiene." —Keith Rosson (Michael, 3230 Eagle Point W., Belton, TX 76543)

TRUST, #113/04,

Eur 2,50, 8 1/2" x 12", 58 pgs.

Unfortunately, there isn't much that I can say about *Trust* because my German isn't what it used to be, so being the busy guy that I try to be, I did not translate the mag for review purposes. Were I to take the time to re-learn the German that I've lost, though, this looks as if it would be a worthwhile read. It's standard format for a glossy zine—interviews, reviews, articles, et al., and features

include stuff on Modern Life Is War, Zann, Attak, the Evens, Fat Wreckords, Debris Inc., and Daniel Johnston. So, if yer up on yer Deutsche, give this a go. —The Lord Kveldulfr (Postfach 11 07 62, Bremen, Germany)

WORLD WAR 3 ILLUSTRATED

#36, \$5, 11" x 8.5", offset, 76 pgs.

Cover features the best Sue Coe painting I've ever seen, so you know right away that the comics you're going to run into aren't exactly geared towards the *Family Circus* set. I've always wanted to check this thing out, and wound up being very glad I got it for review this time around. Essentially, you're going to find a kind of anthology here from a bunch of artists doing comics that your daily newspaper wouldn't touch with a ten foot pole. Everyone from longtime contributor Seth Tobocman to Eric Drooker's words-and-pictures travel journal of his visit to the Gaza Strip, there's a solid dozen contributions here, ranging from one page to small graphic novellets. Standouts have to be Joe Sacco's gorgeous comic, "Complacency Kills." Sacco was "embedded" with the 1st Battalion, 23rd Marine Regiment in Iraq as a press agent. The regiment's located out of a small town along the Euphrates River, and Sacco's comic here (much like his graphic novel *Palestine* and other work he's done) has the ability to show "the troops" as humans and individuals: their faults and strengths, their simulta-

neous struggles with what they're doing coupled with their fear and anger, the impact their presence is having on the people of Iraq, the rage and loss they feel when a member of their unit is killed or injured. Brilliant work. The other noteworthy piece is Penny Allen's "War Is Hell." It's not even a comic, but rather actual stills from a DVD that a soldier returning home gave her after they started talking on a plane. The images are horrific, as are the word bubbles, which are small excerpts from her conversation with the soldier that Allen placed in between the stills. Though the entirety of the issue isn't geared towards Iraq, these two pieces alone go so far towards showing so many of the million ugly, ugly shades of gray inherent in an occupation that was built on a farce, one that, it now appears, the world will be entrenched in for years and years to come. Again, *WW3 Illustrated* is a beautiful anthology full of some intelligent, stunning comics that prove the medium is just as capable of critiques of the powers that be as any film or op-ed piece. Can't give enough praise for this one; would make a fuck of a great White Elephant gift at the next office party. —Keith Rosson (WWIII Illustrated, PO Box 20777, Tompkins Square Station, NY, NY 10009)

Many more zine reviews appear on www.razorcake.com

Barney's Crew
by Sean Carswell
\$10.00 ppd.

The Snake Pit Book
by Ben Snakepit
\$10.00 ppd.

Born to Rock
by Todd Taylor
\$10.00 ppd.

Clue and Ink Rebellion
by Sean Carswell
\$10.00 ppd.

Big Lonesome
by Jim Ruland
\$10.00 ppd.

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Comic Book Artist #6: A Tribute to Will Eisner Edited by Jon B. Cooke, 256 pgs.

Like it says, it's a massive tribute to comic artist Will Eisner, who, among other things, is pretty much credited with essentially inventing the graphic novel as it's known today. This thing's massive: the material includes dozens of essays and memorials to the man from renowned people in the comics field, as well as dozens of reproductions of his art, and small text-and-image memorandums at the end of the book, a kind of thank you list to the man by everyone from Frank Miller to John Updike.

As someone who read comics voraciously throughout the 1980s and early '90s, right to the beginning of Image Comics' start up and blossoming into its current juggernaut-like status, I can see, in retrospect, that Eisner's influence on comics today is absolutely undeniable. Everything, from how he used text as actual *images* in a panel, to the fact that he was probably the first person in comics history to own a studio and pay his artists a living salary, rather than the "kick it out as fast as you can" by-the-page format, which was standard at the time. The tributes at the back of the book, as well as many of the essays by people who knew Eisner or were influenced by him, are touching. He honestly seems to be one of those mythical, near guru-like figures who managed to have a kind word of encouragement to say to everyone, even those just starting out in the field or showing him the rawest aspects of their portfolio.

On one hand, my interest in comics waned pretty seriously by the time punk rock rolled around into my life, but this book was still a fascinating trip, not just into one guy's life, but into an entire artistic field that once totally enthralled me. It's perfect for those who are interested in the "golden age" of comics or who are, of course, particularly interested in the man himself and his unceasing creative output. Mostly, for me, it serves as proof that while comics go through trends just like punk and anything else, there are still people who *have* to be noted as innovators, as visionaries and spearheads; not only is a tribute like this fitting for Will Eisner, it ultimately comes across as necessary. —Keith Rosson (Top Shelf Productions, PO Box 1282, Marietta, GA 30061-1282)

Fury's Hour: A (Sort of) Punk Manifesto by Warren Kinsella, 282 pgs.

I love books about punk rock. It doesn't matter to me that the vast majority of them are one-sided, half memories. It still feels good to read about

something you love. I also love Canadian punk. It's what I grew up on in the backwoods of the Great Canadian Hinterland. Those two points made, I should love this book by Warren Kinsella. Kinsella was the bassist and vocalist of one of Canada's earliest punk bands, Calgary's Hot Nasties. Seeing as he went on from his punk roots to become one of Canada's most regarded political analysts, I figured that his tome on why punk is still viable should be an interesting read.

It kept me interested all right, but in an increasingly angry way. The book is basically Kinsella's interviews with various people throughout the punk rock community with his opinions sprinkled in between. At the beginning, it's quite humorous as he retells his tale of trying to get an interview with John Lydon to no avail. He takes a piss on Lydon and it's funny because everyone knows that Mr. Rotten is a renowned asshole. It looked like the book was going to be entertaining, but then the errors start to appear. One or two would be all right. It's easy enough to bungle up some information (I know I'm guilty of it from time to time), but as the errors started piling up, I found myself wondering if any fact checking was done at all. Here are a few that I feel I should clear up.

1. He slags The Clash for selling their songs to commercials and claims that the only band that truly stuck to the DIY ethic was The Buzzcocks. I guess he never saw the 1999 Toyota SUV commercial featuring "What Do I Get?"

2. Agnostic Front was not at the forefront of the straight edge movement.

3. The Queers are most definitely NOT a "homocore" band.

Okay, now that I've got that out of my system (well, there were a lot more mistakes, but I digress) I can talk about the other things that bothered me. In reading the interviews, I got the feeling that Kinsella was pandering to the subjects that he liked and blasting those he doesn't.

In particular, his treatment of Subhumans' bassist Gerry "Useless" Hannah is mind-boggling. Admittedly, Hannah did go to jail for terrorist activities in the early '80s and everyone has a right to their opinion on it, but Kinsella almost seems to have something personal with Hannah by painting him as an evil, unrepentant ex-con who is scheming to undermine society the first chance he gets. In the book, Hannah is literally equated with Neo-Nazi George Burdi. In the end, however, Kinsella comes off looking bitter because a.) Hannah demanded more money at a Subhumans' show that Kinsella put on in 1980 and b.) Kinsella couldn't get an interview for his book. In fact, all of the book's "current" information on Hannah seems to be culled from the liner notes of a Subhumans' retrospective that came out a decade ago!

On the flipside of that is his treatment of Bad Brains. The band was instrumental in the creation of North American hardcore and deserves credit and reverence for it, but Kinsella neglected to mention Bad Brains' trip to Texas and feud with

MDC, Dicks, and Big Boys. It seems particularly strange after an earlier segment, in which Kinsella championed punk's acceptance of homosexuals and defies the hard-hitting stance he takes with subjects he doesn't like.

It's obvious that this book has struck a chord with me. I suppose it succeeded on that level. It's just not the emotion I was supposed to get from it. I literally had to put it down out of frustration at times. The base idea of the book is a good one. I just think that the author needed to spend less time quoting Pennywise songs (in their entirety) and more time working on a more level-handed and fact-checked book. —Ty Stranglehold (Random House Canada)

One Hand Jerking

by Paul Krassner, 318 pgs.

When asked about his predilection towards all things evil and satanic, The Supersuckers' Eddie Spaghetti used to say that he was in Beelzebub's camp simply because the devil has all the cool graphics. In a similar vein, I've always found myself drawn towards the pranksters and provocateurs in life because they just have always seemed to me to be the people having the most fun. Plain and simple. And as prankster/provocateur pedigrees go, it's hard to beat that of Paul Krassner. This guy is like the Dick Butkus of Team Anti-Establishment and his helmet-first satirical spearing of the hypocrites and the stuffed shirts has probably caused more snot bubbles to pop out of noses than ol' number 51 caused in his wildest, most bloodthirsty gridiron dreams. Krassner's tenure with both *The Realist* and the yippies—the clowns who ran a pig for president and created a near riot at the stock exchange by dumping dollar bills down on the money-crazed suits below—alone is enough to guarantee his craggy mug a spot on the Mount Rushmore of Counter Culture Agitators, right along side such luminaries as Guy Debord and Abbie Hoffman. But unlike those two, Krassner's still alive and kicking and stirring up shit; and unlike yippie-cum-yuppie-cum-suckwad, Jerry Rubin, he hasn't sold out and become a shameless, soulless douchebag.

Krassner's remarkable staying power may well be simply due to his intuitive understanding of the evolutionary imperative of "subverting the dominant paradigm." That, and the fact that he's always had a talent for skewering the sacred and bloated cows in a way that is both funny as hell and zen-ishly instructive. Now an AARP card-carrying seventy-two year old—and still full of piss and vinegar—he seems to be settling comfortably into his role as "investigative satirist," and judging by *One Hand Jerking*, his goal is to unsettle as many people as humanly possible. This is, after all, a man whose credo is "irreverence is our only sacred cow." The title of the book, of course, is a slight twist on the famous zen koan of Hakuin that asks, "What is the sound of one hand clapping?" While it's never good to be over-analytical with koans, I would say that the title here has as much to do with jerking people's chains as it does with the more obvious masturbation/hand job connotations that spring to mind.

In *One Hand Jerking*, the chains of many Gilded Establishment Asses get jerked and, as one might expect, many of them are the flag-sucking puffer fish of conservative, right wing America. But, as you wind your way through the essays and articles in this book, attempting to sort out apparent parody from bizarre reality, you begin to realize that one of the chains being jerked is your own. And as far as I'm concerned, any book or movie or work of art that can kick the legs of certainty out from under you and make you laugh at the same time is a book well worth reading. As Krassner's

old partner in Thought Crime and fellow yippie, Abbie Hoffman used to say, "You have to laugh with us, at us, and take us seriously all at the same time or you're going to miss the point." *One Hand Clapping* is an intoxicating admixture of smelling salts and laughing gas and we are lucky Krassner is still around to whip us up such potions. And we'll all be so lucky if, at his age, any of us are half the gadfly that he is now. —Aphid Peewit (Seven Stories, 140 Watts St., NY, NY 10013)

Will You Still Love Me if I Wet the Bed?

by Liz Prince, 71 pgs.

I started flipping through this before sitting down to read it and was instantly reminded of Jeffrey Brown, who did *Be a Man*, among many other comics. Then, when I started reading from the start, there was an introductory comic by Brown. Good sign for me. It's a collection of quick snapshots into Liz's relationship with her boyfriend,



Out Cold:

Looking through Communist Eyes: DVD

It's a sad fact of life that, oftentimes, putting a punk rock DVD in your player and hitting the play button is like biting into a Hostess Pie and finding it filled with Elmer's glue. (Please excuse the product placement there.) The unfortunate truth is that band DVDs frequently suck. I don't know if that's due to the fact that punk rock folks are, by nature, lame-tit cinematographers or that the medium itself has some sort of reverse osmosis filtering system in play that sucks all the dangerous hoodlum electricity out of the performance, rendering it effectively neutered. Punk and video just don't seem to mix most of the time.

So it was with some trepidation that I approached this live performance of hardcore veterans, Out Cold, performing in St. Petersburg, Russia. Not only was I (at best) distantly familiar with the band, my head was plugged up with cartoonishly simplistic stereotypes of what an audience full of Russians would be like; cold, severe, potato-ish-looking people in heavy clothing and nary a flicker of punk rock primate emotion in their eyes. This could well turn out to be a bad band, poorly filmed, playing for a room of mannequins in mukluks. Well, it turns out I was pleasantly wrong and surprised. Out Cold is a scrappy, unrelenting, no-tits-and-whistles kind of old school hardcore band and their performance here is pretty damn impressive.

Right off the bat, I pegged them as a T-shirt and short haircut early '80s hardcore unit of the BYO ilk, somewhat like Youth Brigade, but with slightly higher, slightly more splintered vocals. But then I noticed that the drummer was wearing a Zeke shirt, of all things, and that the bass player had on a Motörhead shirt. It's fascinating what visual cues can do to one's thinking, but right at that moment I suddenly found myself thinking Out Cold was maybe more like some souped-up, shit-kicking Zeke/ Motörhead type band. Regardless of where you would plot them on the

Kevin. This could easily dive into clichés, or only focus on the big expressions of love, but it steers clear of both which lets it be relatable and not at all trite. It's hard to describe it as anything but cute. Prince shares all the things that most people overlook in a relationship, which are actually the areas that create the most joy. The in jokes, the things done in boredom, the things done in sleep. One of my favorite strips is when Kevin is on tour and they're on the phone. The dialogue goes: Liz: "I don't want to wait 20 more days to snuggle." Kevin: "I'm sorry." Liz: "Can we phone snuggle?" Kevin: "Yes." Liz: "Ok. We're snuggling and our feet are holding hands." Kevin: "I love it when our feet hold hands!" It's pretty much the sweetest thing ever and can even make a bitter and jaded jerk like me think for a few minutes that being in love wouldn't be so bad. Gross. —Megan (Top Shelf Productions, PO Box 1282, Marietta, GA 30061-1282)

punk family tree, they crank out a blistering, stripped-down kind of hardcore that, if you jack the volume up to the proper level, tears into you like a load of Dick Cheney birdshot in the face. (Please excuse the gratuitous political cheap shot there.) This video rips it up good. And you might be pleased to know that my jar-headed notions of Russian stoicism were wildly off the mark too; these unencumbered louts have absolutely no hesitation in going totally apeshit and they easily put many American audiences I've seen to shame. And there wasn't a single fuzzy Brezhnev hat in the bunch. All in all: thirty-three minutes of unaffected, bone-jarring punk rock pleasure. Well worth the eight bucks ppd. —Aphid Peewit (<http://acmrecords.net>)

Wal-Mart: The High Cost of Low Price: DVD I've known since I was a wee tot that I am on the wrong planet. I'm no longer bitter about it; I see it now for what it is: cosmic slapstick, nothing more. The universe, wearing laughably over-sized pants, was trying to balance too many trays of lemon meringue pies and it slipped in some doggy doo and—blamo—I inexplicably fell out of a chute and wound up here. Because of this ontological accident, my life has been, among other things, a comical series of awkward social confrontations wherein my Eldritch alien ways are sharply rebuked by the indigenous earth people. And somehow, through it all, my alien brain has remained astonished each and every time this happens; as though I have a case of perpetual amnesia and can't remember to just keep my yap shut. But I don't think I've ever been quite as astonished by the censure I've endured from my earth neighbors as when I recently found myself at a party and being scolded for acting antagonistic and generally smarty-mouthed towards the most flabbergastingly gargantuan company in the world, Wal-Mart. And I have been pilloried for this "offense" not just once, or twice, but *several* times over the last year or so. Cornered like the Elephant Man by otherwise perfectly reasonable and intelligent people, all of them demanding to know just what the hell my beef is with the kindly huge store that sells us pickles and underpants and lipstick and Josh Groban CDs for dirt cheap. Judging by the bark in their eyes and the snapping of their mandibles, you'd think that my off-hand comments against the super-sized store were meant to tear apart the very yarn that lovingly holds this proud society of ours together.

Most horrible of all, though: I didn't have any snappy Bill O'Reilly-esque answers to give them in rebuttal. No facts or figures or pie charts

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demonstrating the verisimilitude of my position. Instead, I sputtered and mumbled in rhetoric that had all the assertiveness and focus of a bad impressionist painting; talking in runny, inexact language about my intuitive distrust of anything that becomes *just-too-fucking-plain huge* and how gigantism is, in general, not a healthy thing. If you can't see it in über-enormous corporations, I argued, then surely you can see it in examples of human gigantism. Look at the lurching, sickly lives of Robert Wadlow or Andre the Giant or Robert Earl Hughes or Rondo Hatton, all of whom left their deformed, monstrous shells at an early age. Or go take a whiff of the corruption emanating out of the fleshy folds of Poison Idea's gigantic guitarist Pig Champion. Or even look at Johnny "The Wadd" Holmes, whose celebrated giant pee tube allegedly had little or no feeling in it—*because it was just too damn big*. For God's sake, what good is a "wadd" with no feeling?

But each time I tried to present my simple, folksy warnings against severe disproportion, my wispy abstractions did little to sway the "cheap underpants" crowd. They were looking for something more crisply defined, some "truth" that resonated as deeply as the truth of the pennies jingling in their pockets—the pennies they saved by shopping at the Great Store. Maybe they were simply looking for something more "fair and balanced." Whatever it was they wanted from me, I wasn't giving it to them and they let me know it. In a last ditch effort, I vainly grabbed into my little bag of quotes and tried to move them with offerings like Lao Tzu's recommendation to "value smallness" and Lord Acton's warning that "power corrupts and absolute power corrupts absolutely." No dice. These defenders of the Great Store were obviously kinfolk to the "backlashers"; the growing political contingent in this country whose hackles have been raised and whose "response to the power structure is to make the rich richer," as Thomas Frank writes in his book *What's the Matter with Kansas?* They are the Little Guys who, as they are being stepped on by the Big Guys, cheer on those same Big Guys—and they are, to my alien mind, utterly inscrutable. It's little wonder that each of these "confrontations" came to such a lurching halt. Talking about the pitfalls of socio-economic acromegaly to these defenders of giants is like talking to Stockholm Syndrome victims. What I needed was info-byte-sized factoids and the gaudier, the better.

So I decided to finally check out the documentary *Wal-Mart: The High Cost of Low Price*, just to see if my suspicions were as wildly off the mark as, say, G.W.'s notions of Iraqi WMDs. If this particular documentary is to be believed—and if they're only *half* right, they still make one damning case against the Mega-Mart—then it appears my instincts and horse-sense are not as wayward as the earth people might have me believe. For me, this documentary wasn't so much a case of preaching to the choir as it was arming the choir to the teeth. Next time I'm cornered by angry drones wearing "I (Heart) Smiley Face" shirts I'll be able to pepper them factoids about Wal-Mart's dirt poor "associates" (aka: low-rung employees)... so strapped for cash that they can't afford to eat lunch... encouraged by

Wal-Mart to go on welfare... forced to rely on WIC, food stamps, Section 8 Housing and Medicaid... so broke that the only place they can afford to shop is at Wal-Mart.... And I can quickly follow all that up by mentioning that Wal-Mart had \$240 billion in sales just in the year 2003 and that the Walton family is the richest family in America, worth \$102 billion... and that Wal-Mart costs taxpayers \$1,557,000,000 to support its employees.

How's that for Severe Disproportion for you? And that's just the tip of a very ugly iceberg. But while I'm sure there's way more than a grain or two of truth to everything presented in *Wal-Mart: The High Cost of Low Price*, I'm also sure that some fast-talking Wal-Mart shill could, and probably will, counterpoint and spin doctor it all away and seem very credible while doing so. Though I haven't seen it yet, I'm pretty sure that's what the documentary *Why Wal-Mart Works and Why This Makes Some People C-R-A-Z-Y* is all about. But that's just a hunch.

The problem, as I see it, is that all of this is talking about the symptoms more than the disease itself. So ultimately, I come back to my original gut feeling: that Wal-Mart, by virtue of its grotesque size and its never-ending desire to grow even bigger, is not only stomping out the mom and pop competition, but it's stomping out pluralism on multiple levels and replacing it with standardization, homogenization, and blandness on a gargantuan scale. And it's all being done to provide you, the budget-minded consumer, gloriously convenient one-stop shopping—or so they'd like you to think. And in this, they are following the infamous advice of Joseph Goebbels when he said, "What you want is ostensible diversity that conceals an actual uniformity." In other words, what Wal-Mart is peddling, more than anything else, is insipidness. And if a product doesn't meet their standards of insipidity then they resort to their own special brand of strong-arm censorship and bullying techniques.

When you're that blastedly huge, just scratching your nose ends up bullying someone. And that just shows that something is horribly out of whack. I don't need any documentary to point that out to me. Some things are just plain as day. Any company that uses what is perhaps the most thoroughly insipid icon in all of Americana—the '70s Smiley Face—as its mascot, is a company that brandishes its own blandness almost as a weapon. Wal-Mart is like a giant dim-witted leper covered in little yellow smiling tumors and it wants to rub up against you. Whether you decide to let it or not, is up to you—providing you can think beyond the rush of saving a few cents on toe nail clippers or VapoRub or squirt guns or teething toast or *Larry the Cable Guy* DVDs. If we are well advised to "look where we worship," then I'd say, in this *Shoppers Gone Wild* society of ours, that that's tantamount to looking where we consume. Buying a cheap bag of underpants is one thing, but buying it without giving the slightest thought to just who or what is getting your money, is a whole other thing entirely. That's a self-imposed blindness where the Dead Kennedys' "Give Me Convenience or Give Me Death" slogan has suddenly—and dangerously—lost its sarcasm. —Aphid Peevit (www.walmartmovie.com)

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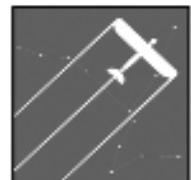
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